

THE DIAL

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THE WOMAN WHO RODE AWAY

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SHE had thought that this marriage, of all marriages, would be an adventure. Not that the man himself was exactly magical to her. A little, wiry, twisted fellow, twenty years older than herself, with brown eyes and greying hair, who had come to America a scrap of a wastrel, from Holland, years ago, as a tiny boy, and from the gold mines of the West had been kicked south into Mexico, and now was more or less rich, owning silver mines in the wilds of the Sierra Madre: it was obvious that the adventure lay in his circumstances, rather than his person. But he was still a little dynamo of energy, in spite of accidents survived, and what he had accomplished he had accomplished alone. One of those human oddments there is no accounting for.

When she actually *saw* what he had accomplished, her heart quailed. Great green-covered, unbroken mountain-hills, and in the midst of the lifeless isolation, the sharp pinkish mounds of the dried mud from the silver-works. Under the nakedness of the works, the walled-in, one-story adobe house, with its garden inside, and its deep inner verandah with tropical climbers on the sides. And when you looked up from this shut-in flowered *patio*, you saw the huge pink cone of the silver-mud refuse, and the machinery of the extracting plant, against heaven above. No more.

To be sure, the great wooden doors were often open. And then she could stand outside, in the vast open world. And see great, void, tree-clad hills piling behind one another, from nowhere into nowhere. They were green in autumn time. For the rest, pinkish—stark, dry, and abstract.

And in his battered Ford car her husband would take her into

the dead, thrice-dead little Spanish town forgotten among the mountains. The great, sun-dried dead church, the dead *portales*, the hopeless covered market-place, where, the first time she went, she saw a dead dog lying between the meat stalls and the vegetable array, stretched out as if for ever, nobody troubling to throw it away. Deadness within deadness.

Everybody feebly talking silver, and showing bits of ore. But silver was at a standstill. The great war came and went. Silver was a dead market. Her husband's mines were closed down. But she and he lived on in the adobe house under the works, among the flowers that were never very flowery to her.

She had two children, a boy and a girl. And her eldest, the boy, was nearly ten years old before she aroused from her stupor of subjected amazement. She was now thirty-three; a large, blue-eyed, dazed woman, beginning to grow stout. Her little, wiry, tough, twisted, brown-eyed husband was fifty-three, a man as tough as wire, tenacious as wire, still full of energy, but dimmed by the lapse of silver from the market, and by some curious inaccessibility on his wife's part.

He was a man of principles, and a good husband. In a way, he doted on her. He never quite got over his dazzled admiration of her. But essentially, he was still a bachelor. He had been thrown out on the world, a little bachelor, at the age of ten. When he married he was over forty, and had enough money to marry on. But his capital was all a bachelor's. He was boss of his own works, and marriage was the last and most intimate bit of his own works. He admired his wife intensely, he admired her body, all her points. And she was to him always the rather dazzling Californian girl from Berkeley, whom he had first known. Like any Sheik, he kept her guarded among those mountains of Chihuahua. He was jealous of her as he was of his silver mine: and that is saying a lot.

At thirty-three she really was still the girl from Berkeley, in all but physique. Her conscious development had stopped mysteriously with her marriage, completely arrested. Her husband had never become real to her, neither mentally nor physically. In spite of his late sort of passion for her, he never meant anything to her, physically. Only morally he swayed her, downed her, kept her in an invincible slavery.

So the years went by, in the adobe house strung round the

sunny *patio*, with the silver-works overhead. Her husband was never still. When the silver went dead, he ran a ranch lower down, some twenty miles away, and raised pure-bred hogs, splendid creatures. At the same time, he hated pigs. He was a squeamish waif of an idealist, and really hated the physical side of life. He loved work, work, and making things. His marriage, his children, were something he was making, part of his business, but with a sentimental income this time.

Gradually her nerves began to go wrong: she must get out. She must get out. So he took her to El Paso for three months. And at least it was the United States.

But he kept his spell over her. The three months ended: back she was, just the same, in her adobe house among those eternal green or pinky-brown hills, void as only the undiscovered is void. She taught her children, she supervised the Mexican boys who were her servants. And sometimes her husband brought visitors, Spaniards or Mexicans or occasionally white men.

He really loved to have white men staying on the place. Yet he had not a moment's peace when they were there. It was as if his wife were some peculiar secret vein of ore in his mines, which no one must be aware of except himself. And she was fascinated by the young gentlemen, mining engineers, who were his guests at times. He, too, was fascinated by a real gentleman. But he was an old-timer bachelor with a wife, and if a gentleman looked at his wife, he felt as if his mine were being looted, the secrets of it pried out.

It was one of these young gentlemen who put the idea into her mind. They were all standing outside the great wooden doors of the *patio*, looking at the outer world. The eternal, motionless hills were all green, it was September, after the rains. There was no sign of anything, save the deserted mine, the deserted works, and a bunch of half-deserted miners' dwellings.

"I wonder," said the young man, "what there is behind those great blank hills."

"More hills," said Lederman. "If you go that way, Sonora and the coast. This way is the desert—you came from there—and the other way, hills and mountains."

"Yes, but what *lives* in the hills and the mountains? Surely there is something wonderful! It looks *so* like nowhere on earth: like being on the moon."

"There's plenty of game, if you want to shoot. And Indians, if you call *them* wonderful."

"Wild ones?"

"Wild enough."

"But friendly?"

"It depends. Some of them are quite wild, and they don't let anybody near. They kill a missionary at sight. And where a missionary can't get, nobody can."

"But what does the government say?"

"They're so far from everywhere, the government leaves 'em alone. And they're wily, if they think there'll be trouble, they send a delegation to Chihuahua and make a formal submission. The government is glad to leave it at that."

"And do they live quite wild, with their own savage customs and religion?"

"Oh, yes. They use nothing but bows and arrows. I've seen them in town, in the Plaza, with funny sorts of hats with flowers round them, and a bow in one hand, quite naked except for a sort of shirt, even in cold weather—striding round with their savages' bare legs."

"But don't you suppose it's wonderful, up there in their secret villages?"

"No. What would there be wonderful about it? Savages are savages, and all savages behave more or less alike: rather low down and dirty, unsanitary, with a few cunning tricks, and struggling to get enough to eat."

"But surely they have old, old religions and mysteries—it *must* be wonderful, surely it must."

"I don't know about mysteries—howling and heathen practices, more or less indecent. No, I see nothing wonderful in that kind of stuff. And I wonder that you should, when you have lived in London or Paris or New York—"

"Ah, *everybody* lives in London or Paris or New York—" said the young man, as if this were an argument.

And his peculiar vague enthusiasm for unknown Indians found a full echo in the woman's heart. She was overcome by a foolish romanticism more unreal than a girl's. She felt it was her destiny to wander into the secret haunts of these timeless, mysterious, marvellous Indians of the mountains.

She kept her secret. The young man was departing, her hus-

band was going with him down to Torreón, on business: would be away for some days. But before the departure, she made her husband talk about the Indians: about the wandering tribes, resembling the Navajo, who were still wandering free; and the Yaquis of Sonora: and the different groups in the different valleys of Chihuahua State.

There was supposed to be one tribe, the Chilchuis, living in a high valley to the south, who were the sacred tribe of all the Indians. The descendants of Montezuma and of the old Aztec or Totonac kings still lived among them, and the old priests still kept up the ancient religion, and offered human sacrifices—so it was said. Some scientists had been to the Chilchui country, and had come back gaunt and exhausted with hunger and bitter privation, bringing various curious, barbaric objects of worship, but having seen nothing extraordinary in the hungry, stark village of savages.

Though Lederman talked in this off-hand way, it was obvious he was really touched by the vulgar marvel of mysterious savages.

"How far away are they?" she asked.

"Oh—three days on horseback—past Cuchitee and a little lake there is up there."

Her husband and the young man departed. The woman made her crazy plans. Of late, to break the monotony of her life, she had harassed her husband into letting her go riding with him occasionally, on horseback. She was never allowed to go out alone. The country truly was not safe, it was lawless and crude.

But she had her own horse, and she dreamed of being free as she had been as a girl, among the hills of California.

Her daughter, nine years old, was now in a tiny convent in the little half-deserted Spanish mining-town five miles away.

"Manuel," said the woman to her house-servant, "I'm going to ride to the convent to see Margarita, and take her a few things. Perhaps I shall stay the night in the convent. You look after Freddy and see everything is all right till I come back."

"Shall I ride with you on the master's horse, or shall Juan?" asked the servant.

"Neither of you. I shall go alone."

The young man looked her in the eyes, in protest. Absolutely impossible that the woman should ride alone!

"I shall go alone," the large, placid-seeming, fair-complexioned

woman repeated with peculiar overbearing emphasis. And the man silently, unhappily yielded.

"Why are you going alone, Mother?" asked her son, as she made up parcels of food.

"Am I *never* to be let alone? Not one moment of my life?" she cried, with sudden explosion of energy. And the child, like the servant, shrank into silence.

She set off without a qualm, riding astride on her strong roan horse, and wearing a riding suit of coarse linen, a riding skirt over her linen breeches, a scarlet neck-tie over her white blouse, and a black felt hat on her head. She had food in her saddle-bags, an army canteen with water, and a large, native blanket tied on behind the saddle. Peering into the distance, she set off from her home. Manuel and the little boy stood in the gateway to watch her go. She did not even turn to wave them farewell.

But when she had ridden about a mile, she left the wild road and took a small trail to the right, that led into another valley, over steep places and past great trees, and through another deserted mining settlement. It was September, the water was running freely in the little stream that had fed the now-abandoned mine. She got down to drink, and let the horse drink too.

She saw natives coming through the trees, away up the slope. They had seen her, and were watching her closely. She watched in turn. The three people, two women and a youth, were making a wide detour, so as not to come too close to her. She did not care. Mounting, she trotted ahead up the silent valley, beyond the silver-works, beyond any trace of mining. There was still a rough trail, that led over rocks and loose stones into the valley beyond. This trail she had already ridden, with her husband. Beyond that, she knew she must go south.

Curiously, she was not afraid, although it was a frightening country, the silent, fatal-seeming mountain slopes, the occasional distant, suspicious, elusive natives among the trees, the great carrion birds occasionally hovering, like great flies, in the distance, over carrion or a ranch house or a group of huts.

As she climbed, the trees shrank and the path ran through a thorny scrub, that was trailed over with blue convolvulus and an occasional pink creeper. Then these flowers lapsed. She was nearing the pine-trees.

She was over the crest, and before her another silent, void,

green-clad valley. It was past midday. Her horse turned to a little runlet of water, so she got down to eat her midday meal. She sat in silence looking at the motionless unliving valley, and at the sharp-peaked hills, rising higher to rock and pine-trees, southwards. She rested two hours in the heat of the day, while the horse cropped around her.

Curious that she was neither afraid nor lonely. Indeed the loneliness was like a drink of cold water to one who is very thirsty. And a strange elation sustained her from within.

She travelled on, and camped at night in a valley beside a stream, deep among the bushes. She had seen cattle and had crossed several trails. There must be a ranch not far off. She heard the strange wailing shriek of a mountain lion, and the answer of dogs. But she sat by her small camp fire in a secret hollow place and was not really afraid. She was buoyed up always by the curious, bubbling elation within her.

It was very cold before dawn. She lay wrapped in her blanket looking at the stars, listening to her horse shivering, and feeling like a woman who has died and passed beyond. She was not sure that she had not heard, during the night, a great crash at the centre of herself, which was the crash of her own death. Or else it was a crash at the centre of the earth, and meant something big and mysterious.

With the first peep of light she got up, numb with cold, and made a fire. She ate hastily, gave her horse some pieces of oil-seed cake, and set off again. She avoided any meeting—and since she met nobody, it was evident that she in turn was avoided. She came at last in sight of the village of Cuchitee, with its black houses with their reddish roofs, a sombre, dreary little cluster below another silent, long-abandoned mine. And beyond, a long, great mountainside, rising up green and light to the darker, shaggier green of pine-trees. And beyond the pine-trees stretches of naked rock against the sky, rock slashed already and brindled with white stripes of snow. High up, the new snow had already begun to fall.

And now, as she neared, more or less, her destination, she began to grow vague and disheartened. She had passed the little lake among yellowing aspen trees whose white trunks were round and suave like the white round arms of a woman. What a lovely place! In California she would have raved about it. But here

she looked and saw that it was lovely, but she didn't care. She was weary and spent with her two nights in the open, and afraid of the coming night. She didn't know where she was going, or what she was going for. Her horse plodded dejectedly on, towards that immense and forbidding mountain slope, following a stony little trail. And if she had had any will of her own left, she would have turned back, to the village, to be protected and sent home to her husband.

But she had no will of her own. Her horse splashed through a brook, and turned up a valley, under immense yellowing cotton-wood trees. She must have been nearly nine thousand feet above sea-level, and her head was light with the altitude and with weariness. Beyond the cotton-wood trees she could see, on each side, the steep sides of mountain slopes hemming her in, sharp-plumaged with overlapping aspen, and higher up, with sprouting, pointed spruce and pine-trees. Her horse went on automatically. In this tight valley, on this slight trail, there was nowhere to go but ahead, climbing.

Suddenly her horse jumped, and three men in dark blankets were on the trail before her.

"*Adios!*" came the greeting, in the full, restrained Indian voice.

"*Adios!*" she replied, in her assured, American woman's voice.

"Where are you going?" came the quiet question, in Spanish.

The men in the dark serapes had come closer, and were looking up at her.

"On ahead," she replied coolly, in her hard, Saxon Spanish.

These were just natives to her: dark-faced, strongly-built men in dark serapes and straw hats. They would have been the same as the men who worked for her husband, except, strangely, for the long black hair that fell over their shoulders. She noted this long black hair with a certain distaste. These must be the wild Indians she had come to see.

"Where do you come from?" the same man asked. It was always the one man who spoke. He was young, with quick, large, bright black eyes that glanced sideways at her. He had a soft black moustache on his dark face, and a sparse tuft of beard, loose hairs on his chin. His long black hair, full of life, hung unrestrained on his shoulders. Dark as he was, he did not look as if he had washed lately.

His two companions were the same, but older men, powerful

and silent. One had a thin black line of moustache, but was beardless. The other had the smooth cheeks and the sparse dark hairs marking the lines of his chin with the beard characteristic of the Indians.

"I come from far away," she replied, with half-jocular evasion.

This was received in silence.

"But where do you live?" asked the young man, with that same quiet insistence.

"In the north," she replied airily.

Again there was a moment's silence. The young man conversed quietly, in Indian, with his two companions.

"Where do you want to go, up this way?" he asked suddenly, with challenge and authority, pointing briefly up the trail.

"To the Chilchui Indians," answered the woman laconically.

The young man looked at her. His eyes were quick and black, and inhuman. He saw, in the full evening light, the faint smile of assurance on her rather large, calm, fresh-complexioned face: the weary, bluish lines under her large blue eyes: and in her eyes, as she looked down at him, a half-childish, half-arrogant confidence in her own female power. But in her eyes also, a curious look of trance.

"*Usted es Señora?* You are a married lady?" the Indian said.

"Yes I am a lady," she replied complacently.

"With a family?"

"With a husband and two children, boy and girl," she said.

The Indian turned to his companions and translated, in the low, gurgling speech, like hidden water running. They were evidently at a loss.

"Where is your husband?" asked the young man.

"Who knows?" she replied airily. "He has gone away on business for a week."

The black eyes watched her shrewdly. She, for all her weariness, smiled faintly in the pride of her own adventure and the assurance of her own womanhood, and the spell of the madness that was on her.

"And what do *you* want to do?" the Indian asked her.

"I want to visit the Chilchui Indians—to see their houses and to know their Gods," she replied.

The young man turned and translated quickly, and there was a silence almost of consternation. The grave elder men were

glancing at her sideways, with strange looks, from under their decorated hats. And they said something to the young man, in deep chest voices.

The latter still hesitated. Then he turned to the woman.

"Good!" he said. "Let us go. But we cannot arrive until to-morrow. We shall have to make a camp to-night."

"Good!" she said, "I can make a camp."

Without more ado, they set off at a fair speed up the stony trail. The young Indian ran alongside her horse's head, the other two ran behind. One of them had taken a thick stick, and occasionally he struck her horse a resounding blow on the haunch, to urge him forward. This made the horse jump, and threw her against the saddle horn, which, tired as she was, made her angry.

"Don't do that!" she cried, looking round angrily at the fellow. She met his black, large, bright eyes, and for the first time her spirit really quailed. The man's eyes were not human to her, and they did not see her as a beautiful white woman. He looked at her with a black, bright inhuman look, and saw no woman in her at all. As if she were some strange, unaccountable *thing*, incomprehensible to him, but inimical. She sat in her saddle in wonder, feeling once more as if she had died. And again he struck her horse, and jerked her badly in the saddle.

All the passionate anger of the spoilt white woman rose in her. She pulled her horse to a standstill, and turned with blazing eyes to the man at her bridle.

"Tell that fellow not to touch my horse again," she cried.

She met the eyes of the young man, and in their bright black inscrutability she saw a fine spark, as in a snake's eyes, of derision. He spoke to his companion in the rear, in the low tones of the Indian. The man with the stick listened without looking. Then, giving a strange low cry to the horse, he struck it again on the rear, so that it leaped forward spasmodically up the stony trail, scattering the stones, pitching the weary woman in her seat.

The anger flew like a madness into her eyes, she went white at the gills. Fiercely she reined in her horse. But before she could turn, the young Indian had caught the reins under the horse's throat, jerked them forward, and was trotting ahead rapidly, leading the horse.

The woman was powerless. And along with her supreme anger there came a slight thrill of exultation. She knew she was dead.

The sun was setting, a great yellow light flooded the last of the aspens, flared on the trunks of the pine-trees, the pine-needles bristled and stood out with dark lustre, the rocks glowed with unearthly glamour. And through this effulgence the Indian at her horse's head trotted unweariedly on, his dark blanket swinging, his bare legs glowing with a strange transfigured ruddiness, in the powerful light, and his straw hat with its half-absurd decorations of flowers and feathers shining showily above his river of long black hair. At times he would utter a low call to the horse, and then the other Indian, behind, would fetch the beast a whack with the stick.

The wonder-light faded off the mountains, the world began to grow dark, a cold air breathed down. In the sky, half a moon was struggling against the glow in the west. Huge shadows came down from steep rocky slopes. Water was rushing. The woman was conscious only of her fatigue, her unspeakable fatigue, and the cold wind from the heights. She was not aware how moonlight replaced daylight. It happened while she travelled unconscious with weariness.

For some hours they travelled by moonlight. Then suddenly they came to a standstill. The men conversed in low tones for a moment.

"We camp here," said the young man.

She waited for him to help her down. He merely stood holding the horse's bridle. She almost fell from the saddle, so fatigued.

They had chosen a place at the foot of rocks that still gave off a little warmth of the sun. One man cut pine-boughs, another erected little screens of pine-boughs against the rock, for shelter, and put boughs of balsam pine, for beds. The third made a small fire, to heat tortillas. They worked in silence.

The woman drank water. She did not want to eat—only to lie down.

"Where do I sleep?" she asked.

The young man pointed to one of the shelters. She crept in and lay inert. She did not care what happened to her, she was so weary, and so beyond everything. Through the twigs of spruce she could see the three men squatting round the fire on their hams, chewing the tortillas they picked from the ashes with their dark fingers, and drinking water from a gourd. They talked in low, muttering tones, with long intervals of silence. Her saddle and

saddle-bags lay not far from the fire, unopened, untouched. The men were not interested in her nor her belongings. There they squatted with their hats on their heads, eating, eating mechanically, like animals, the dark serape with its fringe falling to the ground before and behind, the powerful dark legs naked and squatting like an animal's, showing the dirty white shirt and the sort of loin-cloth which was the only other garment, underneath. And they showed no more sign of interest in her than if she had been a piece of venison they were bringing home from the hunt, and had hung inside a shelter.

After a while they carefully extinguished the fire, and went inside their own shelter. Watching through the screen of boughs, she had a moment's thrill of fear and anxiety, seeing the dark forms cross and pass silently in the moonlight. Would they attack her now?

But no! They were as if oblivious of her. Her horse was hobbled: she could hear it hopping wearily. All was silent, mountain-silent, cold, deathly. She slept and woke, and slept in a semi-conscious numbness of cold and fatigue. A long, long night, icy and eternal, and she aware that she had died.

Yet when there was a stirring, and a clink of flint and steel, and the form of a man crouching like a dog over a bone, at a red splutter of fire, and she knew it was morning coming, it seemed to her the night had passed too soon.

When the fire was going, she came out of her shelter with one real desire left: for coffee. The men were warming more tortillas.

"Can we make coffee?" she asked.

The young man looked at her, and she imagined the same faint spark of derision in his eyes. He shook his head.

"We don't take it," he said. "There is no time."

And the elder men, squatting on their haunches, looked up at her in the terrible paling dawn, and there was not even derision in their eyes. Only that intense, yet remote, inhuman glitter which was terrible to her. They were inaccessible. They could not see her as a woman at all. As if she *were* not a woman. As if, perhaps, her whiteness took away all her womanhood, and left her as some giant, female, white ant. That was all they could see in her.

Before the sun was up, she was in the saddle again, and they were climbing steeply, in the icy air. The sun came, and soon

she was very hot, exposed to the glare in the bare places. It seemed to her they were climbing to the roof of the world. Beyond against heaven were slashes of snow.

During the course of the morning, they came to a place where the horse could not go further. They rested for a time with a great slant of living rock in front of them, like the glossy breast of some earth-beast. Across this rock, along a wavering crack, they had to go. It seemed to her that for hours she went in torment, on her hands and knees, from crack to crevice, along the slanting face of this pure rock-mountain. An Indian in front and an Indian behind walked slowly erect, shod with sandals of braided leather. But she in her riding-boots dared not stand erect.

Yet why, she wondered all the time, did she persist in clinging and crawling along these mile-long sheets of rock? Why did she not hurl herself down, and have done! The world was below her.

When they emerged at last on a stony slope, she looked back, and saw the third Indian coming carrying her saddle and saddlebags on his back, the whole hung from a band across his forehead. And he had his hat in his hand, as he stepped slowly, with the slow, soft, heavy tread of the Indian, unwavering in the chinks of rock, as if along a scratch in the mountain's iron shield.

The stony slope led downwards. The Indians seemed to grow excited. One ran ahead at a slow trot, disappearing round the curve of stones. And the track curved round and down, till at last in the full blaze of the mid-morning sun, they could see a valley below them, between walls of rock, as in a great wide chasm let in the mountains. A green valley, with a river, and trees, and clusters of low flat sparkling houses. It was all tiny and perfect, three thousand feet below. Even the flat bridge over the stream, and the square with the houses around it, the bigger buildings piled up at opposite ends of the square, the tall cotton-wood trees, the pastures and stretches of yellow-sere maize, the patches of brown sheep or goats on the slopes, in the distance, the railed enclosures by the stream-side. There it was, all small and perfect, looking magical, as any place will look magical, seen from the mountains above. The unusual thing was that the low houses glittered white, whitewashed, looking like crystals of salt, or silver. This frightened her.

They began the long, winding descent at the head of the *barranca*, following the stream that rushed and fell. At first it was

all rocks: then the pine-trees began, and soon, the silver-limbed aspens. The flowers of autumn, big pink daisy-like flowers, and white ones, and many yellow flowers, were in profusion. But she had to sit down and rest, she was so weary. And she saw the bright flowers shadowily, as pale shadows hovering, as one who is dead must see them.

At length came grass and pasture-slopes between mingled aspen and pine-trees. A shepherd, naked in the sun save for his hat and his cotton loin-cloth, was driving his brown sheep away. In a grove of trees they sat and waited, she and the young Indian. The one with the saddle had also gone forward.

They heard a sound of someone coming. It was three men, in fine serapes of red and orange and yellow and black, and with brilliant feather head-dresses. The oldest had his grey hair braided with fur, and his red and orange-yellow serape was covered with curious black markings, like a leopard-skin. The other two were not grey-haired, but they were elders too. Their blankets were in stripes, and their head-dresses not so elaborate.

The young Indian addressed the elders in a few quiet words. They listened without answering or looking at him or at the woman, keeping their faces averted and their eyes turned to the ground, only listening. And at length they turned and looked at the woman.

The old chief, or medicine-man, whatever he was, had a deeply wrinkled and lined face of dark bronze, with a few sparse grey hairs round the mouth. Two long braids of grey hair, braided with fur and coloured feathers, hung on his shoulders. And yet, it was only his eyes that mattered. They were black and of extraordinary piercing strength, without a qualm of misgiving in their demonic, dauntless power. He looked into the eyes of the white woman with a long, piercing look, seeking she knew not what. She summoned all her strength to meet his eyes and keep up her guard. But it was no good. He was not looking at her as one human being looks at another. He never even perceived her resistance or her challenge, but looked past them both, into she knew not what.

She could see it was hopeless to expect any human communication with this old being.

He turned and said a few words to the young Indian. "He asks, what do you seek here?" said the young man in Spanish.

"I? Nothing! I only came to see what it was like."

This was again translated, and the old man turned his eyes on her once more. Then he spoke again, in his low muttering tone, to the young Indian.

"He says, why does she leave her house with the white man? Does she want to bring the white man's God to the Chilchui?"

"No," she replied, foolhardy. "I came away from the white man's God myself. I came to look for the God of the Chilchui."

Profound silence followed, when this was translated. Then the old man spoke again, in a small voice almost of weariness.

"Does the white woman seek the gods of the Chilchui because she is weary of her own God?" came the question.

"Yes, she does. She is tired of the white man's God," she replied, thinking that was what they wanted her to say. "She would like to serve the gods of the Chilchui."

She was aware of an extraordinary thrill of triumph and exultation passing through the Indians, in the tense silence that followed when this was translated. Then they all looked at her with piercing black eyes, in which a steely covetous intent glittered incomprehensible. She was the more puzzled, as there was nothing sensual or sexual in the look. It had a terrible glittering purity that was beyond her. She was afraid, she would have been paralysed with fear, had not something died within her, leaving her with a cold, watchful wonder only.

The elders talked a little while, then the two went away, leaving her with the young man and the oldest chief. The old man now looked at her with a certain solicitude.

"He says, are you tired?" asked the young man.

"Very tired," she said.

"The men will bring you a carriage," said the young Indian.

The carriage, when it came, proved to be a litter consisting of a sort of hammock of dark woollen frieze, slung on to a pole which was borne on the shoulders of two long-haired Indians. The woollen hammock was spread on the ground, she sat down on it, and the two men raised the pole to their shoulders. Swinging rather as if she were in a sack, she was carried out of the grove of trees, following the old Chief, whose leopard-spotted blanket moved curiously in the sunlight.

They had emerged in the valley-head. Just in front were the maize fields, with ripe ears. The corn was not very tall in this

high altitude. The well-worn path went between it, and all she could see was the erect form of the old chief, in the flame and black serape, stepping soft and heavy and swift, his head forward, looking neither to right nor left. Her bearers followed, stepping rhythmically, the long blue-black hair glistening like a river down the naked shoulders of the man in front.

They passed the maize, and came to a big wall or earthwork made of earth and adobe bricks. The wooden doors were open. Passing on, they were in a network of small gardens, full of flowers and herbs and fruit trees, each garden watered by a tiny ditch of running water. Among each cluster of trees and flowers was a small, glittering white house, windowless, and with closed door. The place was a network of little paths, small streams, and little bridges among square, flowering gardens.

Following the broadest path—a soft narrow track between leaves and grass, a path worn smooth by centuries of human feet, no hoof of horse nor any wheel to disfigure it—they came to the little river of swift bright water, and crossed on a log bridge. Everything was silent—there was no human being anywhere. The road went on under magnificent cotton-wood trees. It emerged suddenly outside the central plaza or square of the village.

This was a long oblong of low white houses with flat roofs; and two bigger buildings, having as it were little square huts piled on top of bigger long huts, stood at either end of the oblong, facing each other rather askew. Every little house was a dazzling white, save for the great round beam-ends which projected under the flat eaves, and for the flat roofs. Round each of the bigger buildings, on the outside of the square, was a stockyard fence, inside which was a garden with trees and flowers, and various small houses.

Not a soul was in sight. They passed silently between the houses into the central square. This was quite bare and arid, the earth trodden smooth by endless generations of passing feet, passing across from door to door. All the doors of the windowless houses gave on to this blank square, but all the doors were closed. The firewood lay near the threshold, a clay oven was still smoking, but there was no sign of moving life.

The old man walked straight across the square to the big house at the end, where the two upper storeys, as in a house of

toy bricks, stood each one smaller than the lower one. A stone staircase, outside, led up to the roof of the first story.

At the foot of this staircase the litter-bearers stood still, and lowered the woman to the ground.

"You will come up," said the young Indian who spoke Spanish.

She mounted the stone stairs to the earthen roof of the first house, which formed a platform around the wall of the second story. She followed around this platform to the back of the big house. There they descended again, into the garden at the rear.

So far they had seen no one. But now two men appeared, bare-headed, with long braided hair, wearing a sort of white shirt gathered into a loin-cloth. These went along with the three newcomers, across the garden where red flowers and yellow flowers were blooming, to a long, low white house. There they entered without knocking.

It was dark inside. There was a low murmur of men's voices. Several men were present, their white shirts showing in the gloom, their dark faces invisible. . . . They were sitting on a great log of smooth old wood, that lay along the far wall. And save for this log, the room seemed empty. But no, in the dark at one end was a couch, a sort of bed, and someone lying there, covered with furs.

The old Indian in the spotted serape, who had accompanied the woman, now took off his hat and his blanket and his sandals. Laying them aside, he approached the couch, and spoke in a low voice. For some moments there was no answer. Then an old man with snow-white hair hanging round his darkly-visible face, roused himself like a vision, and leaned on one elbow, looking vaguely at the company, in tense silence.

The grey-haired Indian spoke again, and then the young Indian, taking the woman's hand, led her forward. In her linen riding habit, and black boots and hat, and her pathetic bit of a red tie, she stood there beside the fur-covered bed of the old, old man, who sat reared up, leaning on one elbow, remote as a ghost, his white hair streaming in disorder, his face almost black, yet with a far-off intentness, not of this world, leaning forward to look at her.

His face was so old, it was like dark glass, and the few curling hairs that sprang white from his lips and chin were quite incredible.

The long white locks fell unbraided and disorderly on either side of the glassy, dark face. And under a faint powder of white eyebrows, the black eyes of the old chief looked at her as if from the far, far dead, seeing something that was never to be seen.

At last he spoke a few deep, hollow words, as if to the dark air.

"He says, do you bring your heart to the god of the Chilchui?" translated the young Indian.

"Tell him yes," she said, automatically.

There was a pause. The old Indian spoke again, as if to the air. One of the men present went out. There was a silence as if of eternity, in the dim room that was lighted only through the open door.

The woman looked round. Four old men with grey hair sat on the log by the wall facing the door. Two other men, powerful and impassive, stood near the door. They all had long hair, and wore white shirts gathered into a loin-cloth. Their powerful legs were naked and dark. There was a silence like eternity.

At length the man returned, with white and black clothing on his arm. The young Indian took them, and holding them in front of the woman, said:

"You must take off your clothes, and put these on."

"If all you men will go out," she said.

"No one will hurt you," he said quietly.

"Not while you men are here," she said.

He looked at the two men by the door. They came quickly forward, and suddenly gripped her arms as she stood, without hurting her, but with great power. Then two of the old men came, and with curious skill slit her boots down with keen knives, and drew them off, and slit her clothing so that it came away from her. In a few moments she stood there white and uncovered. The old man on the bed spoke, and they turned her round for him to see. He spoke again, and the young Indian deftly took the pins and comb from her fair hair, so that it fell over her shoulders in a bunchy tangle.

Then the old man spoke again. The Indian led her to the bedside. The white-haired, glassy-dark old man moistened his finger-tips at his mouth, and most delicately touched her on the breasts and on the body, then on the back. And she winced

strangely each time, as the finger-tips drew along her skin, as if Death itself were touching her.

And she wondered, almost sadly, why she did not feel ashamed in her nakedness. She only felt sad and lost. Because nobody felt ashamed. The elder men were all dark and tense with some other deep, gloomy, incomprehensible emotion, which suspended all her agitation, while the young Indian had a strange look of ecstasy on his face. And she, she was only utterly strange and beyond herself, as if her body were not her own.

They gave her the new clothing: a long white cotton shift, that came to her knees: then a tunic of thick blue woollen stuff, embroidered with scarlet and green flowers. It was fastened over one shoulder only, and belted with a braided sash of scarlet and black wool.

When she was thus dressed, they took her away, barefoot, to a little house in the stockaded garden. The young Indian told her she might have what she wanted. She asked for water to wash herself. He brought it in a jar, together with a long wooden bowl. Then he fastened the gate-door of her house, and left her a prisoner. She could see through the bars of the gate-door of her house the red flowers of the garden, and a humming bird. Then from the roof of the big house she heard the long, heavy sound of a drum, unearthly to her in its summons, and an uplifted voice calling from the housetop in a strange language, with a far-away emotionless intonation, delivering some speech or message. And she listened as if from the dead.

But she was very tired. She lay down on a couch of skins, pulling over her the blanket of dark wool, and she slept, giving up everything.

When she woke it was late afternoon, and the young Indian was entering with a basket-tray containing food, tortillas, and corn-mush with bits of meat, probably mutton, and a drink made of honey, and some fresh plums. He brought her also a long garland of red and yellow flowers with knots of blue buds at the end. He sprinkled the garland with water from a jar, then offered it to her, with a smile. He seemed very gentle and thoughtful, and on his face and in his dark eyes was a curious look of triumph and ecstasy, that frightened her a little. The glitter had gone from the black eyes, with their curving dark lashes, and he would

look at her with this strange soft glow of ecstasy that was not quite human, and terribly impersonal, and which made her uneasy.

"Is there anything you want?" he said, in his low, slow, melodious voice, that always seemed withheld, as if he were speaking aside, to somebody else, or as if he did not want to let the sound come out to her.

"Am I going to be kept a prisoner here?" she asked.

"No, you can walk in the garden to-morrow," he said softly.

Always this curious solicitude.

"Do you like that drink?" he said, offering her a little earthenware cup. "It is very refreshing."

She sipped the liquor curiously. It was made with herbs and sweetened with honey, and had a strange, lingering flavour. The young man watched her with gratification.

"It has a peculiar taste," she said.

"It is very refreshing," he replied, his black eyes resting on her always with that look of gratified ecstasy. Then he went away. And presently she began to be sick, and to vomit violently, as if she had no control over herself.

Afterwards she felt a great soothing languor steal over her, her limbs felt strong and loose and full of languor, and she lay on her couch listening to the sounds of the village, watching the yellowing sky, smelling the scent of burning cedar-wood, or pine-wood. So distinctly she heard the yapping of tiny dogs, the shuffle of far-off feet, the murmur of voices, so keenly she detected the smell of smoke, and flowers, and evening falling, so vividly she saw the one bright star infinitely remote, stirring above the sunset, that she felt as if all her senses were diffused on the air, that she could distinguish the sound of evening flowers unfolding, and the actual crystal sound of the heavens, as the vast belts of the world-atmospheres slid past one another, and as if the moisture ascending and the moisture descending in the air resounded like some harp in the cosmos.

To be concluded



HOMMAGE À PAUL MORAND. BY JEAN COCTEAU

COUNSEL TO A YOUNG MAN

BY SCOFIELD THAYER

Clasp not the ankle of the cursive moon
Nor agitate the stars with your despair:
They know you not; and singularly soon
Their beauty shall not be your nightly care.

Impose your will upon the transient earth
And order the divergent ways of man,
Let East Wind know your spirit's mounting worth,
Let cities know which way you will, and can.

Join not with dogs in barking a dead moon,
Increase not mountainous rivers with your grief,
Granite and dumb, outface the raucous noon,
Granite and dumb, hold yet yourself in fief.

Assert the heart, and count not loss or gain
In other metal than the heart allows;
Assert the heart, and know not other pain
Than that wherein a heart may nobly house:

The pain that stars are stars, that earth is earth,
That man is man, and that hearts, too, shall die.
Though multitudinously you prove your worth,
When Death confronts you, you will not reply.

MADAME DE SEVIGNE IN THE COUNTRY

BY LOGAN PEARSALL SMITH

IN travelling across France the train sometimes passes a formal park, through which a great avenue, opening its vista for a second, reveals at the end of that perspective the mansard roofs and stately façade of some seventeenth-century *château*; and in the imagination of the traveller this little glimpse may awaken the thought of the great age of French history—that vainglorious reign, so famous in arts and arms, of Louis XIV, the *Roi-Soleil*. To an American or English traveller at least there may be something pompous and cold in the vision, thus suddenly evoked, of this vanished France; he may not be able easily to imagine what the personages were really like for whom these parks were laid out and these stately houses erected. But, on the other hand, it is possible that our traveller may feel himself curiously at home in this period—more at home there, indeed, than in the democratic France of the date of his railway journey. Many of the inhabitants may seem to him like long-acquainted friends, with the very texture of whose minds he has become familiar, learning in long days of delightful conversation the things they liked and laughed at, the problems they puzzled over, and with what fears and hopes their thoughts travelled along those avenues to the Court and the wars.

Thus to reverse the time-process, thus to be transported back into the actual life of a bygone epoch, requires a spell, a necromancy we might call it, more potent than that of history: the chroniclers, the historians, and even the memoir-writers of the *Grand Siècle*, can at most enable us to see it, so to speak, from without—to look in, as through gates of gilded iron, upon that formal region. If then our Anglo-Saxon traveller can enter there at ease, can feel himself happy and at home in that society, it must be because a more intimate access, a more personal introduction, has been his privilege: he must have made the acquaintance, and have won the friendship, we may safely hazard, of the lady of genius who stands ready with her golden key to open that escutcheoned gate to those who love her. This magic instrument,

the wand which this enchantress wielded (though without the slightest consciousness of its power) was nothing more than the feathered quill with which Mme de Sévigné scribbled her almost countless letters to her daughter—letters which, in spite of their old dates and spellings, come to us across the centuries like contemporary documents, and read indeed as if they had been written hardly more than a day or two ago. With almost all the upholstered figures of past epochs it is a constant effort to believe that they once actually existed, did once indubitably breathe the air and walk in the sunshine of this earthly scene; but with Mme de Sévigné, so limpid is the sound of her voice, so lively her glance, so inextinguishable the spirit of life that shines and sparkles in her letters, that we find it hard to believe—we cannot really believe—that she has been, for more than two centuries, dead.

When we get to know her best, at the beginning of her correspondence with her daughter, Mme de Sévigné was approaching the age of fifty, but her face still retained the colouring of girlhood; she enjoyed, she said, the fine blood that ran so agreeably and lightly through her veins, almost believing that she had discovered some fountain of perpetual youth—for how otherwise could she account for her splendid and triumphant health? This *divine Marquise*, with her fair complexion, her blue eyes and golden hair, was a lady of rank and high distinction, who was famous for her wit and grace and beauty. She played no insignificant part in the society of her time, and her biographers have for the most part written of her as a woman of the world, a great lady of Parisian society, a wit and *raconteuse* of worldly gossip. The temptation, indeed, to write of this aspect of her life is a strong one: she loved the world, and appreciated in a curiously conscious way all that was magnificent in the stately age she lived in—the rejoicings for victories, the pomp of great marriages, and the splendour of Versailles as it shone new-built and brilliant in contemporary eyes; the torches and gold costumes of the fêtes there, the confusion without confusion of the courtiers and music, the stately figure of the Grand Monarch, and the triumphant beauty of his mistresses, with their thousand ringlets, their lace and pearls. How diversified everything was, how gay and gallant; and surely, she said, writing before its disastrous eclipse, never had there been a star so brilliant as the King's!

But interesting as is Mme de Sévigné's account of the Court and fashion, she herself is more delightful than any good society—the "fine creature," as her English lover, Edward FitzGerald, called her, was, as he said, all genuine, "all Truth and Daylight"; and it is the picture she unconsciously gives us of her own frank, generous-hearted nature, her "good Sense" (to quote FitzGerald once more) "Good Feeling, Humour, Love of Books and Country Life," which is the greatest charm of this correspondence. "*Rien n'est bon*," she wrote, "*que d'avoir une belle et bonne âme; on la voit en toute chose comme à travers d'un cœur de cristal*"; and this sentence might form the best motto for the many volumes of her correspondence. We see into this crystal heart perhaps most clearly in the long letters written in the solitude and leisure of her country days. Although her home was in Paris, she had a retreat at Livry, in the midst of a forest not many miles away. Sometimes in the spring she would drive thither in her coach and six, merely for the afternoon, to refresh her spirit with the young green of the trees and the songs of the nightingales; and often she would live for weeks or months there, especially in the autumn, finding in that autumnal forest a solitude, a melancholy, and a silence which, she often felt, she loved better than anything else in the world.

But much the greater number of her country letters were written from the family estate in far-off Brittany, where long periods of her life were spent. First of all she describes the journey from Paris, partly in her coach by road, and partly with the coach on board a sailing boat and floating down the Loire; and these journeys are so vividly reflected in the magic glass she carries with her that we remember them almost as intimately as if they had been journeys of our own. Sometimes she would travel alone in the company of her uncle, the old Abbé, with whom she lived, sometimes with friends who were making the same journey; and she often recounts the conversations with which they filled the long hot days of driving. Often, too, she would stop at the country houses of friends on the way, and, with her coach drawn into the coach-house, her horses resting in the stables, she would pay long visits at these great *châteaux*, with their avenues and terraces and fountains, bored or pleased, according to the company she found in them. But sooner or later these journeys, with all their fatigues, and with their accidents, for her coach would sometimes upset

and land her in a ditch—they were strange things, long journeys, and if one remembered them one would never travel, but God made one forget—she would arrive on her own estates and drive up the avenue to her own *château*, where she would find awaiting her the business affairs and social duties which belonged to her position as an important territorial personage and the mistress of a great estate.

The *château* of Les Rochers lies about four miles from the town of Vitry, and no great distance from Mont St Michel. The house, the formal gardens, the woods with their great avenues, remain as they were when she lived there; the orange trees in their tubs are her orange trees; the clipped limes are the limes she planted; and the room in which she wrote her letters, with its table, its portraits, the bed of yellow satin, embroidered by her daughter, is now as she describes it in her letters, fresh and gay, and almost untouched by time. We are familiar not only with Les Rochers, but with the society of the neighbourhood—a society, as she regarded it, of tiresome and pretentious people, whom she was always trying to avoid. Some critics have greatly blamed her for her contempt of the provincial *noblesse*, which was, they say, so superior in moral qualities to the high and fashionable society of Paris and the Court in which she delighted; but posterity can hardly reprehend with much enthusiasm the aristocratic disdain to which we owe so amusing a picture-gallery of provincial bores, each of them touched off with a light and witty malice which makes us understand why her intimates found such a delight in her company that, as one of them declared, he at least would hardly care to go on living without her, *ne sachant avec qui rire finement*. She was much beset by these unwelcome neighbours, who would come to call so often, or even to stay in the house for longer visits; but she consoled herself with the philosophic thought that bad company was after all better than good—it was so delightful to have it go! The departure of tiresome guests—what could be a greater pleasure? she would ask her daughter: "*Je me ménage les délices d'un adieu charmant*," she writes of some visitors staying in the house, describing later on how exquisitely the sound of their departing coach-wheels had refreshed her blood.

But a great part of the time Mme de Sévigné was more or less

alone at Les Rochers with her uncle, the old Abbé, who helped her manage her affairs. One of their main occupations was the improvement of the property: each of them had a band of workmen; the Abbé loved to build, and was always wandering out to look at the chapel he was erecting, while his niece had a passion for planting trees. She would be sometimes out, early in the mornings, up to her knees in dew, marking out new plantations; and each time when, after an absence, she arrived again in Brittany, she would hurry out to see her avenues, marvelling at the growth of the trees she had planted, the long shadows they cast, and how much greener they were than the trees near Paris. Was it their nature to be so green, she wondered, or was it the freshness of the Breton rains? There is indeed a charming breath of the forest in these old letters, and it is somewhat surprising to see this fine lady, who so dearly loved all that was gay and amusing and brilliant in the elegant and opulent society of Paris, suddenly transformed into a kind of woodland creature, spending, even in the winter, long days in the silence and solitude of her forest paths; to see her looking like a *loup-garou*, as she said, and dressed in an old coat and an old straw hat, planting with her workmen oak-trees in the rain.

That love of wild nature which we regard as a modern passion, that blending of mood and landscape which so deeply colours our modern consciousness, is generally supposed—and supposed with much truth—to date from the time when sunsets and lakes and woods and mountains first mirrored themselves, with all the splendour and richness of their colouring, in the romantic eyes of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. But Rousseau had his predecessors: there were lovers of nature before his birth, and among them Mme de Sévigné, with her passion for trees, must be counted; for although, like her contemporaries, she was blind to the beauty of lakes and moors and mountains, and although her woods were not the savage and dark forests in which Chateaubriand entombed his inexplicable despair, but arranged plantations, with mottoes on the trees, and dry and pleasant walks, and labyrinths, and artificial echoes; yet her melancholy delight in the solitude, the mystery, the *sainte horreur*, as she called it, of these lofty groves, her passion for wandering at night in their dark recesses, were moods of *romantisme avant la lettre*, as the French call it. Nor have any romantic

writers of a later period noted with greater sensitiveness the changing aspects and hours of forest scenery; the frosty stillness of winter days, with faint sunlight making the distance dim and misty; the beauty of the leafless trees in March, with a confused noise of birds that foretold the spring; the triumph of May with the nightingales; the coolness of the woods in torrid weather, the sweetness of the summer nights there, with their soft and gracious air; the beauty of the sunsets at the ends of the great avenues, or the enchantment of the moon, silvering the shadowy spaces of their long perspectives. "*Nous avions entendu un cor dans le fond de cette forêt*"—we rub our eyes: can this haunting sentence have been penned, so long before Alfred de Vigny's birth, by a lady of fashion in the bewigged reign of Louis the Fourteenth?

A foreigner who might attempt to define for himself the charm of these seventeenth-century letters, although he might not be able to analyse into its elements this liquid and harmonious French, flowing on through volume after volume with the inexhaustible vivacity of a fountain of clear water, could not but note the felicity of the many translucent phrases which mirror with such limpidity the woodland lights and shadows, as they coloured Mme de Sévigné's meditations and tinged her varying moods, while she paced those avenues, hour after hour and day after day. Heaven only knew, she said, what thoughts she didn't think in that Breton forest: there were pleasant memories and hopes and day dreams; and there was a great spectacle of contemporary history, which she watched from her woods, and over which she moralized with unfailing interest. She liked great events, great changes of fortune pleased her; and there were certain strokes of Providence which, although they took her breath away, delighted her with their suddenness and grandeur.

But the general conclusion of all her thoughts was a sad one; almost all her meditations led to a melancholy moral. Kings, and the lovely mistresses of kings, princes, and courtiers, as she thought of them in her sombre forest, all seemed to her examples of human misery and weakness. And none of these actors, playing their parts, great or small, on the world's stage, was contented; and not one of them—and she found in the thought a melancholy kind of consolation—was really happy. And she herself? For her too there were many black thoughts lurking in the forest which she

tried to hurry past without regarding. Her humour was indeed a happy one; she was easily amused, and could accommodate herself, she said, to almost anything that happened; and all that was essentially cruel in human conditions, the mockery of hope, the swift passing of time—the very shadows of the great trees she had planted reminding her that she too was growing old—even the nearness of hideous and degrading old age, and of death, which she feared and hated—all this she could bear without repining; it was the common lot. But thus to be growing old and perishing so far from the person she loved with so strange a passion—this was a thought to which neither religion nor philosophy could reconcile her; nothing could cure her bitter tears.

Mme de Sévigné's letters to the daughter she loved with this vehemence of passion have so much the character of love-letters that many readers have been repelled from them by the tiresome monotony which seems inseparable from effusions of this kind. There is indeed in all extreme affection an element of unreason—a divine madness, it may be, but still a madness—which disconcerts us: the elixir of love is a divine potation, but it is most serviceable for literature after it has been tempered and transfused by art—decanted, it may be, into the crystal chalice of a lyric, or cooled in the ornamented jars of a sonnet-sequence; and impetuous love-letters, fervid with the ebullitions of unmoderated feeling, are apt to pall, in the end, upon the unenamoured reader. Even Edward FitzGerald, who in his latter years became so devoted to his "blessed Sévigné" that he composed, as a labour of love, a big dictionary of the places and persons mentioned in her letters, confesses that he had been kept aloof from them for many years by "that eternal daughter of hers"; and others of her admirers cannot but be wearied at times by her praises of Mme de Grignan's perfections and her laments over their ever-recurring separations, especially since posterity has enviously, and perhaps unjustly, agreed to look upon this Countess as an unamiable and sophisticated prig, who was by no means a worthy object of so ardent a maternal passion.

But then they remind themselves that this fine excess has after all its pathetic beauty, and that without its inspiration Mme de Sévigné would never have written these golden letters, in which she made use of all her resources to amuse and entertain not only

her daughter, but posterity as well—gathering the pick, as she said, of all the baskets, the flower of her wit and thoughts and eyes and pen. And after all, they remember, the poor lady, unlike most lovers, was more or less aware of her own folly, and tried to moderate its vehemence and vary its expression in a hundred humorous and graceful ways. Still it was her song, as inevitable and natural to her as the nightingale's descant; and she repeats its phrases over and over with the musical reiteration of that woodland chorister. "*Ah! la jolie chose qu'une feuille qui chante!*" she wrote of the nightingale in a phrase which has become famous; and as she reiterates her longing for the being whose image was her inseparable companion, her voice echoes from the formal forests of seventeenth-century France with something of the pathos and beauty of that fabled parent's musical lament. For the thought of Mme de Grignan was, she said, the centre and depth of all her meditations; around it everything else slid and vanished; and should ever, by some miracle, that thought desert her, it would leave her like a wax figure, hollow and empty and with nothing within. So all day long, and day after day, her imagination, out-distancing the swift couriers who were carrying her letters to the South, would wing its way across the breadth of France to the terraces and triumphant view of that great mountain castle in Provence, where, amid an uproar of music and guests and servants, and a perpetual storm of wind, the lovely philosophic Countess lived and reigned.

Mme de Grignan piqued herself upon her mastery of the modern and fashionable philosophy of Descartes; her mother was of the older, more human, and homely school of Montaigne, whose essays she was so fond of reading; and curiously enough she remains, with Montaigne, one of the human beings of the past with whom posterity is most intimately acquainted—being indeed, as FitzGerald said of her, much more living to us than most of the living people whom we see about us. Writing long ago those hasty epistles to which she attached not the slightest importance, letting her pen gallop at its will with the reins upon its neck, as she set down amid her woods her meditations on mortality and on the cruel lapse of time, which was bearing her away, with all she loved, so swiftly upon its resistless stream, yet in her very complaints of his invincible power she was, though she had no notion

of it, splendidly triumphing over this old enemy. And indeed Time himself, busied as always with his great work of ruin and obliteration, has for once proved himself a chivalrous opponent, turning away his scythe to preserve with delicate care the slightest records of Mme de Sévigné's moods and fancies. Many writers have longed for durable renown, labouring with no success to win an immortality in the thoughts of succeeding ages; but this splendid gift of Fame was vouchsafed to Mme de Sévigné in answer to no request of hers. That easy, graceful, smiling defeat of oblivion, that effortless and unconscious victory, we might almost call it, over Death, which is the magic and marvel and the ultimate interest of her writing, was the outcome of a genius she never knew she possessed; nor had she indeed the slightest notion that, in a life in which nothing happened, she was turning into immortality everything she touched, weaving out of her ephemeral thoughts a delicate but enduring tissue which has proved untarnishable by time. And amid the destruction of so much of ancient France, the scene and background of her country meditations still remains, with its formal gardens, its architecture, and the great avenues of its environing forests, so inviolate, so unblemished by the ineffectual and defeated years, that the tourist from another age who makes a pilgrimage to Les Rochers will almost ask himself at last, with a kind of eerie wonder, whether he may not be himself more of a ghost than the spirit he has come to visit—an evanescent shadow or *revenant* out of the chaos of a future much more doubtful than the immortality of that lifetime which is destined to outlast his own—that golden past which shines in these unfading letters, and seems indeed actually to gleam before his eyes, illuminating the circle of sunny space within the enclosure of those Breton woods.

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LANDSCAPE WITH COW. BY THOMAS H. BENTON



THE TUNNEL. BY THOMAS H. BENTON

THE HUNCH-BACK

BY FRANCES GREGG

IT was while waiting for the little steamer that plies between the mainland and Cap Ferret that I first saw the creature who was to project me, by a single glance, into a new plane of consciousness.

The usual people were drifting past. All these French watering-places have the same barber-pole gaiety. Sashed and tam-o'-shantered boatmen were soliciting trade. Women too. Then some young girls passed, looking like figures out of a Greek frieze: sleeveless tunics, bare feet in sandals, and filleted short hair. They walked against the wind, with that stiff archaic grace that is authentic youth. It was when they had passed that I caught sight of the dwarf, and in his eyes was a look of creative appreciation such as one catches occasionally from some passer before the Elgin marbles, or before the entrance blocks of some Egyptian tomb.

The whole process of art was in his glance—the immediate creation of a spiritual equivalent: the making of them symbolic; a re-creation of them in the abstract relating them to that mysterious and infinite something that we call Beauty. But it was an approach to Beauty of a specific and peculiar kind.

There is, in a certain type of the art of all civilizations, but perhaps more especially in all primitives, an immediate preoccupation with the reluctant and hidden beauty of existence: a beauty that has no relation to the actual material world, to what is known as "reality"; that is like the sound that lies in the air from the inadvertent touching of a stringed instrument, or like a flame that leaps into the air and is gone—a promise, a hope, a myth. From age to age there are artists whose work gives out this haunting note, who make the same gesture, a gesture at once exultant and exhausted. Botticelli, perhaps, most nearly made the thing finite and tangible in the tranquil ecstasy of his Venus rising from the waves, and in his Primavera. Dante breathes his credo doubly shrouded from the lips of Beatrice. And Leonardo, in treacher-

ous fealty, like one who kissed a blood-drained cheek, speaks from the smiling eyes and lips of his St John and his Mona Lisa, oddly combining both love and betrayal.

This dwarf was such as these. He knew that ecstasy. He knew too that melancholy, that blight, that withdrawn, rejected yearning, that proud, unbitter, loss of hope. There was in him a mad purity of receptivity, and a stark loneliness that were best hidden. He had so much that I did not dare to pity him, though his body was so extraordinarily hunched and broken.

He strode about, seeming to flaunt his deformity as though he had achieved it in some monstrous rites. His head was beautiful, as is often the case with hunch-backs, and wonderfully fair. So far south, where there is a swarthinness shadowing the people, it was odd to see a coppery head and lancing blue eyes. I was pondering upon this when suddenly he looked toward me. For an instant our eyes met in an appalling intimacy.

There is a strange and miraculous thing that can happen with the meeting of eyes, as though some ethereal fluid went from brain to brain, bathing them in a sure and sudden comprehension. Our eyes had fled from the encounter almost as I realized that I had started back with an obvious and vulgar recoil, with some swift repulsion.

It would be hard to say what had happened. There are certain decencies, certain reserves that one has even with one's own spirit, certain hurts that must be dissembled, certain laments too pitiful to be acknowledged. This all-knowing face had peered in upon my solitude.

If a mummy had spoken out of its glass show-case, if eyes that had gone to dust had raised their parchment lids, if the stretched lips of death had spoken, I should not have been more startled, nor more outraged. Sometimes one seems to fly back upon oneself in wild disorder, hurtling back through aeons to some fastness of innocence. But I found no refuge.

So worlds hurled themselves down through a steep darkness.

The season was over when I saw him next on the jetty where the fishing smacks come in. Fish are always to be had cheap there. People come with newspapers and carry away great packages for fifty centimes or a franc.

The dwarf was there, swaggering in his hip-boots, making over-

long steps that lurched his ridiculous body. A little leering smile flickered upon the firm and sensual lips, but he looked thin and pinched by hunger. He had no newspaper and took what they gave him without money, headless trodden scraps, in bare hands.

That he had brought no newspaper was like a cry to me. If no one should choose to give to him, well, he had not come prepared. Thus he kept ahead of humiliation. A sailor, with a jerk of his shoulders, indicated a heap of scraps that he might have. The hunch-back gave a single, quick, calculating stare, then gathered them together, and began scooping the entrails out with his fingers. All the while he kept me in surveillance.

We made each other uncomfortable. So I left and drifted on to the next town, and then further. I thought to evade his gaze, but all the world is not space enough.

PSYCHOLOGY AND FORM

BY KENNETH BURKE

IT is not, one will recall, until the fourth scene of the first act that Hamlet confronts the ghost of his father. As soon as the situation has been made clear, the audience has been, consciously or unconsciously, waiting for this ghost to appear, while in the fourth scene this moment has been definitely promised. For earlier in the play Hamlet had arranged to come to the platform at night with Horatio to meet the ghost, and it is now night, he is with Horatio and Marcellus, and they are standing on the platform. Hamlet asks Horatio the hour.

"Hor. I think it lacks of twelve.

Mar. No, it is struck.

Hor. Indeed? I heard it not: then it draws near the season
Wherein the spirit held his wont to walk."

Promptly hereafter there is a sound off-stage. "A flourish of trumpets, and ordnance shot off within." Hamlet's friends have established the hour as twelve. It is time for the ghost. Sounds off-stage, and of course it is not the ghost. It is, rather, the sound of the king's carousal, for the king "keeps wassail." A tricky, and effective detail. We have been waiting for a ghost, and get, startlingly, a blare of trumpets. And again, once the trumpets are silent, we feel all the more just how desolate are these three men waiting for a ghost, on a bare "platform," feel it by this sudden juxtaposition of an imagined scene of lights and merriment. But the trumpets announcing a carousal have suggested a subject of conversation. In the darkness Hamlet discusses the excessive drinking of his countrymen. He points out that it tends to harm their reputation abroad, since, he argues, this one showy vice makes their virtues "in the general censure take corruption." And for this reason, although he himself is a native of this place, he does not approve of the custom. Indeed, there in the gloom he is talking very intelligently on these matters, and Horatio answers, "Look,

my Lord, it comes." All this time we had been waiting for a ghost, and it comes at the one moment which was not pointing towards it. This ghost, so assiduously prepared for, is yet a surprise. And now that the ghost has come, we are waiting for something further. Programme: a speech from Hamlet. Hamlet must confront the ghost. Here again Shakespeare can feed well upon the use of contrast for his effects. Hamlet has just been talking in a sober, rather argumentative manner—but now the flood-gates are unloosed:

"Angels and ministers of grace defend us!

Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damn'd,

Bring with thee airs from heaven or blasts from hell . . ."

and the transition from the matter-of-fact to the grandiose, the full-throated and full-vowelled, is a second burst of trumpets, perhaps even more effective than the first, since it is the rich fulfilment of a promise. Yet this satisfaction in turn becomes an allurements, an itch for further developments. At first desiring solely to see Hamlet confront the ghost, we now want Hamlet to learn from the ghost the details—which are, however, with shrewdness and husbandry, reserved for "Scene V.—Another Part of the Platform."

I have gone into this scene at some length, since it illustrates so perfectly the relationship between psychology and form, and so aptly indicates how the one is to be defined in terms of the other. That is, the psychology here is not the psychology of the *hero*, but the psychology of the *audience*. And by that distinction, form would be the psychology of the audience. Or, seen from another angle, form is the creation of an appetite in the mind of the auditor, and the adequate satisfying of that appetite. This satisfaction—so complicated is the human mechanism—at times involves a temporary set of frustrations, but in the end these frustrations prove to be simply a more involved kind of satisfaction, and furthermore serve to make the satisfaction of fulfilment more intense. If, in a work of art, the poet says something, let us say, about a meeting, writes in such a way that we desire to observe that meeting, and then, if he places that meeting before us—that is form. While obviously, that is also the psychology of the audience, since it involves desires and their appeasements.

The seeming breach between form and subject-matter, between technique and psychology, which has taken place in the last century is the result, it seems to me, of scientific criteria being unconsciously introduced into matters of purely aesthetic judgement. The flourishing of science has been so vigorous that we have not yet had time to make a spiritual readjustment adequate to the changes in our resources of material and knowledge. There are disorders of the social system which are caused solely by our undigested wealth (the basic disorder being, perhaps, the phenomenon of overproduction: to remedy this, instead of having all workers employed on half time, we have half working full time and the other half idle, so that whereas overproduction could be the greatest reward of applied science, it has been, up to now, the most menacing condition our modern civilization has had to face). It would be absurd to suppose that such social disorders would not be paralleled by disorders of culture and taste, especially since science is so pronouncedly a spiritual factor. So that we are, owing to the sudden wealth science has thrown upon us, all *nouveaux-riches* in matters of culture, and most poignantly in that field where lack of native firmness is most readily exposed, in matters of aesthetic judgement.

One of the most striking derangements of taste which science has temporarily thrown upon us involves the understanding of psychology in art. Psychology has become a body of information (which is precisely what psychology in science should be, or must be). And similarly, in art, we tend to look for psychology as the purveying of information. Thus, a contemporary writer has objected to Joyce's *Ulysses* on the ground that there are more psychoanalytic data available in Freud. (How much more drastically he might, by the same system, have destroyed Homer's *Odyssey*!) To his objection it was answered that one might, similarly, denounce Cézanne's trees in favour of state forestry bulletins. Yet are not Cézanne's landscapes themselves tainted with the psychology of information? Has he not, by perception, *pointed out* how one object lies against another, *indicated* what takes place between two colours (which is the psychology of science, and is less successful in the medium of art than in that of science, since in art such processes are at best implicit, whereas in science they are so readily made explicit)? Is Cézanne not, to

that extent, a state forestry bulletin, except that he tells what goes on in the eye instead of on the tree? And do not the true values of his work lie elsewhere—and precisely in what I distinguish as the psychology of form?

Thus, the great influx of information has led the artist also to lay his emphasis on the giving of information—with the result that art tends more and more to substitute the psychology of the hero (the subject) for the psychology of the audience. Under such an attitude, when form is preserved it is preserved as an annex, a luxury, or, as some feel, a downright affectation. It remains, though sluggish, like the human appendix, for occasional demands are still made upon it; but its true vigour is gone, since it is no longer organically required. Proposition: The hypertrophy of the psychology of information is accompanied by the corresponding atrophy of the psychology of form.

In information, the matter is intrinsically interesting. And by intrinsically interesting I do not necessarily mean intrinsically valuable, as to witness the intrinsic interest of backyard gossip or the most casual newspaper items. In art, at least the art of the great ages (Aeschylus, Shakespeare, Racine) the matter is interesting by means of an extrinsic use, a function. Consider, for instance, the speech of Mark Anthony, the "Brutus is an honourable man." Imagine in the same place a very intelligently developed thesis on human conduct, with statistics, intelligence tests, definitions; imagine it as the finest thing of the sort ever written, and as really being at the roots of an understanding of Brutus. Obviously, the play would simply stop until Anthony had finished. For in the case of Anthony's speech, the value lies in the fact that his words are shaping the future of the audience's desire, not the desires of the Roman populace, but the desires of the pit. This is the psychology of form as distinguished from the psychology of information.

The distinction is, of course, absolutely true only in its non-existent extremes. Hamlet's advice to the players, for instance, has little of the quality which distinguishes Anthony's speech. It is, rather, intrinsically interesting, although one could very easily prove how the play would benefit by some such delay at this point, and that anything which made this delay possible without violating the consistency of the subject would have, in this, its formal justi-

fication. While it would, furthermore, be absurd to rule intrinsic interest out of literature. I wish simply to have it restored to its properly minor position, seen as merely one out of many possible elements of style. Goethe's prose, often poorly imagined, or neutral, in its line-for-line texture, especially in the treatment of romantic episode—perhaps he felt that the romantic episode in itself was enough?—is strengthened into a style possessing affirmative virtues by his rich use of aphorism. But this is, after all, but one of many possible facets of appeal. In some places, notably in Wilhelm Meister's *Lehrjahre* when Wilhelm's friends disclose the documents they have been collecting about his life unbeknown to him, the aphorisms are almost rousing in their efficacy, since they involve the story. But as a rule the appeal of aphorism is intrinsic: that is, it satisfies without being functionally related to the context.¹ . . . Also, to return to the matter of Hamlet, it must be observed that the style in this passage is no mere "information-giving" style; in its alacrity, its development, it really makes this one fragment into a kind of miniature plot.

One reason why music can stand repetition so much more sturdily than correspondingly good prose is because music, of all the arts, is by its nature least suited to the psychology of information, and has remained closer to the psychology of form. Here form cannot atrophy. Every dissonant chord cries for its solution, and whether the musician resolves or refuses to resolve this dissonance into the chord which the body cries for, he is dealing in human appetites. Correspondingly good prose, however, more prone to the temptations of pure information, cannot so much bear repetition since the aesthetic value of information is lost once that information is imparted. If one returns to such a work again it is purely because, in the chaos of modern life, he has been caused to forget it. With a desire, on the other hand, its recovery is as agreeable as its discovery. One can memorize the dialogue between Hamlet and Guildenstern, where Hamlet gives Guildenstern the pipe to play

¹ Similarly, the epigram of Racine is "pure art," because it usually serves to formulate or clarify some situation within the play itself. In Goethe the epigram is most often of independent validity, as in *Die Wahlverwandtschaften*, where the ideas of Otilie's diary are obviously carried over boldly from the author's notebook. In Shakespeare we have the union of extrinsic and intrinsic epigram, the epigram growing out of its context and yet valuable independent of its context.

on. For, once the speech is known, its repetition adds a new element to compensate for the loss of novelty. We cannot take a recurrent pleasure in the new (in information) but we can in the natural (in form). Already, at the moment when Hamlet is holding out the pipe to Guildenstern and asking him to play upon it, we "gloat over" Hamlet's triumphal descent upon Guildenstern, when, after Guildenstern has, under increasing embarrassment, protested three times that he cannot play the instrument, Hamlet launches the retort for which all this was preparation:

"Why, look you now, how unworthy a thing you make of me. You would play upon me, you would seem to know my stops; you would pluck out the heart of my mystery; you would sound me from my lowest note to the top of my compass; and there is much music, excellent voice, in this little organ, yet cannot you make it speak. 'Sblood, do you think I am easier to be played on than a pipe? Call me what instrument you will, though you can fret me, you cannot play upon me."¹

In the opening lines we hear the promise of the close, and thus feel the emotional curve even more keenly than at first reading. Whereas in most modern art this element is underemphasized. It gives us the gossip of a plot, a plot which too often has for its value the mere fact that we do not know its outcome.²

Music, then, fitted less than any other art for imparting information, deals minutely in frustrations and fulfilments of desire,³ and for that reason more often gives us those curves of emotion

¹ One might indicate still further appropriateness here. As Hamlet finishes his speech, Polonius enters, and Hamlet turns to him, "God bless you, sir!" Thus, the plot is continued (for Polonius is always the promise of action) and a full stop is avoided: the embarrassment laid upon Rosenkrantz and Guildenstern is not laid upon the audience.

² Yet modern music has gone far in the attempt to renounce this aspect of itself. Its dissonances become static, demanding no particular resolution. And whereas an unfinished modulation by a classic musician occasions positive dissatisfaction, the refusal to resolve a dissonance in modern music does not dissatisfy us, but irritates or stimulates. Thus, "energy" takes the place of style.

³ Suspense is the least complex kind of anticipation, as surprise is the least complex kind of fulfilment.

which, because they are natural, can bear repetition without loss. It is for this reason that music, like folk tales, is most capable of lulling us to sleep. A lullaby is a melody which comes quickly to rest, where the obstacles are easily overcome—and this is precisely the parallel to those waking dreams of struggle and conquest which (especially during childhood) we permit ourselves when falling asleep or when trying to induce sleep. Folk tales are just such waking dreams. Thus it is right that art should be called a "waking dream." The only difficulty with this definition (indicated by Charles Baudouin in his *Psychoanalysis and Aesthetics*, a very valuable study of Verhaeren) is that to-day we understand it to mean art as a waking dream for the artist. Modern criticism, and psychoanalysis in particular, is too prone to define the essence of art in terms of the artist's weaknesses. It is, rather, the audience which dreams, while the artist oversees the conditions which determine this dream. He is the manipulator of blood, brains, heart, and bowels which, while we sleep, dictate the mould of our desires. This is, of course, the real meaning of artistic felicity—an exaltation at the correctness of the procedure, so that we enjoy the steady march of doom in a Racinian tragedy with exactly the same equipment as that which produces our delight with Benedick's "Peace! I'll stop your mouth. (*Kisses her*)" which terminates the imbroglia of *Much Ado About Nothing*.

The methods of maintaining interest which are most natural to the psychology of information (as it is applied to works of pure art) are surprise and suspense. The method most natural to the psychology of form is eloquence. For this reason the great ages of Aeschylus, Shakespeare, and Racine, dealing as they did with material which was more or less a matter of common knowledge so that the broad outlines of the plot were known in advance (while it is the broad outlines which are usually exploited to secure surprise and suspense) developed formal excellence, or eloquence, as the basis of appeal in their work.

Not that there is any difference in kind between the classic method and the method of the cheapest contemporary melodrama. The drama, more than any other form, must never lose sight of its audience: here the failure to satisfy the proper requirements is most disastrous. And since certain contemporary work is successful, it follows that rudimentary laws of composition are being

complied with. The distinction is one of intensity rather than of kind. The contemporary audience hears the lines of a play or novel with the same equipment as it brings to reading the lines of its daily paper. It is content to have facts placed before it in some more or less adequate sequence. Eloquence is the minimizing of this interest in fact, *per se*, so that the "more or less adequate sequence" of their presentation must be relied on to a much greater extent. Thus, those elements of surprise and suspense are subtilized, carried down into the writing of a line or a sentence, until in all its smallest details the work bristles with disclosures, contrasts, restatements with a difference, ellipses, images, aphorism, volume, sound-values, in short all that complex wealth of minutiae which in their line-for-line aspect we call style and in their broader outlines we call form.

As a striking instance of a modern play with potentialities in which the intensity of eloquence is missing, I might cite a recent success, Capek's *R. U. R.* Here, in a melodrama which was often astonishing in the rightness of its technical procedure, when the author was finished he had written nothing but the scenario for a play by Shakespeare. It was a play in which the author produced time and again the opportunity, the demand, for eloquence, only to move on. (At other times, the most successful moments, he utilized the modern discovery of silence, writing moments wherein words could not possibly serve but to detract from the effect: this we might call the "flowering" of information.) The Adam and Eve scene of the last act, a "commission" which the Shakespeare of the comedies would have loved to fill, was in the verbal barrenness of Capek's play something shameless to the point of blushing. The Robot, turned human, prompted by the dawn of love to see his first sunrise, or hear the first bird-call, and forced merely to say "Oh, see the sunrise," or "Hear the pretty birds"—here one could do nothing but wring his hands at the absence of that aesthetic mould which produced the overslung "speeches" of Romeo and Juliet.

Suspense is the concern over the possible outcome of some specific detail of plot rather than for general qualities. Thus, "Will A marry B or C?" is suspense. In *Macbeth*, the turn from the murder scene to the porter scene is a much less literal channel of development. Here the presence of one quality calls forth the

demand for another, rather than one tangible incident of plot awakening an interest in some other possible tangible incident of plot. To illustrate more fully, if an author managed over a certain number of his pages to produce a feeling of sultriness, or oppression, in the reader, this would unconsciously awaken in the reader the desire for a cold, fresh northwind—and thus some aspect of a northwind would be effective if called forth by some aspect of stuffiness. A good example of this is to be found in a contemporary poem, T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, where the vulgar, oppressively trivial conversation in the public house calls forth in the poet a memory of a line from Shakespeare. These slobs in a public house, after a desolately low-visioned conversation, are now forced by closing time to leave the saloon. They say good-night. And suddenly the poet, feeling his release, drops into another good-night, a good-night with *désinvolture*, a good-night out of what was, within the conditions of the poem at least, a graceful and irrecoverable past.

"Well that Sunday Albert was home, they had a hot gammon,
And they asked me in to dinner, to get the beauty of it hot"
—[at this point the bartender interrupts: it is closing time]
"Goonight Bill. Goonight Lou. Goonight May. Goonight.
Ta ta. Goonight. Goonight.
Good-night, ladies, good-night, sweet ladies, good-night, good-night."

There is much more to be said on these lines, which I have shortened somewhat in quotation to make my issue clearer. But I simply wish to point out here that this transition is a bold juxtaposition of one quality created by another, an association in ideas which, if not logical, is nevertheless emotionally natural. In the case of *Macbeth*, similarly, it would be absurd to say that the audience, after the murder scene, wants a porter scene. But the audience does want the quality which this porter particularizes. The dramatist might, conceivably, have introduced some entirely different character or event in this place, provided only that the event produced the same quality of relationship and contrast (grotesque seriousness followed by grotesque buffoonery). . . . One of the most beautiful and satisfactory "forms" of this sort is to be found in Baudelaire's *Femmes Damnées*, where the poet, after describing

the business of a Lesbian seduction, turns to the full oratory of his apostrophe:

*"Descendez, descendez, lamentables victimes,
Descendez le chemin de l'enfer éternel . . ."*

while the stylistic efficacy of this transition contains a richness which transcends all moral (or unmoral) sophistication: the efficacy of appropriateness, of exactly the natural curve in treatment. Here is morality even for the godless, since it is a morality of art, being justified, if for no other reason, by its paralleling of that staleness, that disquieting loss of purpose, which must have followed the procedure of the two characters, the *femmes damnées* themselves, a remorse which, perhaps only physical in its origin, nevertheless become psychic.¹

But to return, we have made three terms synonymous: form, psychology, and eloquence. And eloquence thereby becomes the essence of art, while pity, tragedy, sweetness, humour, in short all the emotions which we experience in life proper, as non-artists, are simply the material on which eloquence may feed. The arousing of pity, for instance, is not the central purpose of art, although it may be an adjunct of artistic effectiveness. One can feel pity much more keenly at the sight of some actual misfortune—and it would be a great mistake to see art merely as a weak representation of some actual experience.² That artists to-day are content to write under such an aesthetic accounts in part for the inferior position which art holds in the community. Art, at least in the great periods when it has flowered, was the conversion, or transcendence, of emotion into eloquence, and was thus a factor added

¹ As another aspect of the same subject, I could cite many examples from the fairy tale. Consider, for instance, when the hero is to spend the night in a bewitched castle. Obviously, as darkness descends, weird adventures must befall him. His bed rides him through the castle; two halves of a man challenge him to a game of nine-pins played with thigh bones and skulls. Or entirely different incidents may serve instead of these. The quality comes first, the particularization follows.

² Could not the Greek public's resistance to Euripides be accounted for in the fact that he, of the three great writers of Greek tragedy, betrayed his art, was guilty of aesthetic impiety, in that he paid more attention to the arousing of emotion *per se* than to the sublimation of emotion into eloquence?

to life. I am reminded of St Augustine's caricature of the theatre: that whereas we do not dare to wish people unhappy, we do want to feel sorry for them, and therefore turn to plays so that we can feel sorry although no real misery is involved. One might apply the parallel interpretation to the modern delight in happy endings, and say that we turn to art to indulge our humanitarianism in a well-wishing which we do not permit ourselves towards our actual neighbours. Surely the catharsis of art is more complicated than this, and more reputable.

Eloquence itself, as I hope to have established in the instance from Hamlet which I have analysed, is no mere plaster added to a framework of more stable qualities. Eloquence is simply the end of art, and is thus its essence. Even the poorest art is eloquent, but in a sorry manner, with less intensity, until this aspect is obscured by others fattening upon its leanness. Eloquence is not showiness; it is, rather, the result of that desire in the artist to make a work perfect by adapting it in every minute detail to the racial appetites.

The distinction between the psychology of information and the psychology of form involves a definition of aesthetic truth. It is here precisely, to combat the deflection which the strength of science has caused to our tastes, that we must examine the essential breach between scientific and artistic truth. Truth in art is not the discovery of facts, not an addition to human knowledge in the scientific sense of the word.¹ It is, rather, the exercise of human

¹ One of the most striking examples of the encroachment of scientific truth into art is the doctrine of "truth by distortion," whereby one aspect of an object is suppressed the better to emphasize some other aspect; this is, obviously, an attempt to *indicate* by art some fact of knowledge, to make some implicit aspect of an object as explicit as one can by means of the comparatively dumb method of art (dumb, that is, as compared to the perfect ease with which science can indicate its discoveries). Yet science has already made discoveries in the realm of this "factual truth," this "truth by distortion" which must put to shame any artist who relies on such matter for his effects. Consider, for instance, the motion-picture of a man vaulting. By photographing this process very rapidly, and running the reel very slowly, one has upon the screen the most striking set of factual truths to aid in our understanding of an athlete vaulting. Here, at our leisure, we can observe the contortions of four legs, a head, and a butt. This squirming thing we saw upon the screen showed us an infinity of factual truths anent the balances of an athlete vaulting. We can, from this, observe the marvellous system of balancing which the body provides for itself in the adjustments of moving. Yet, so far as

propriety, the formulation of symbols which rigidify our sense of poise and rhythm. Artistic truth is the externalization of taste.² I sometimes wonder, for instance, whether the "artificial" speech of John Lyly might perhaps be "truer" than the revelations of Dostoevsky. Certainly at its best, in its feeling for a statement which returns upon itself, which attempts the systole to a diastole, it *could* be much truer than Dostoevsky.³ And if it is not, it fails not through a mistake of Lyly's aesthetic, but because Lyly was a man poor in character whereas Dostoevsky was rich and complex. When Swift, making the women of Brobdingnag enormous, deduces from this discrepancy between their size and Gulliver's that Gulliver could sit astride their nipples, he has written something which is aesthetically true, which is, if I may be pardoned, profoundly "proper," as correct in its Euclidean deduction as any corollary in geometry. Given the companions of Ulysses in the cave of Polyphemus, it is true that they would escape clinging to the bellies of the herd let out to pasture. St Ambrose, detailing the habits of God's creatures, and drawing from them moral maxims for the good of mankind, St Ambrose in his limping natural history rich in scientific inaccuracies that are at the very heart of emotional rightness, St Ambrose writes "Of night-birds, especially of the nightingale which hatches her eggs by song; of the owl, the bat, and the cock at cock-crow; in what wise these may apply to the guidance of our habits," and in the sheer rightness of that programme there is the truth of art. In introducing this talk of night-birds, after many pages devoted to other of God's creatures, he says,

"What now! While we have been talking, you will notice how

the aesthetic truth is concerned, this on the screen was not an athlete, but a squirming thing, a horror, displaying every fact of vaulting except the exhilaration of the act itself.

² The procedure of science involves the elimination of taste, employing as a substitute the corrective norm of the pragmatic test, the empirical experiment, which is entirely intellectual. Those who oppose the "intellectualism" of critics like Matthew Arnold are involved in an hilarious blunder, for Arnold's entire approach to the appreciation of art is through delicacies of taste intensified to the extent almost of squeamishness.

³ As for instance, the "conceit" of Endymion's awakening, when he forgets his own name, yet recalls that of his beloved.

the birds of night have already started fluttering about you, and, in this same fact of warning us to leave off with our discussion, suggest thereby a further topic"—

and this seems to me to contain the best wisdom of which the human frame is capable, an address, a discourse, which can make our material life seem blatant almost to the point of despair. And when the cock crows, and the thief abandons his traps, and the sun lights up, and we are in every way called back to God by the well-meaning admonition of this bird, here the very blindnesses of religion become the deepest truths of art.

THOSE OF LUCIFER

BY MALCOLM COWLEY

Out of an empty sky the dust of hours
a word was spoken and a folk obeyed
an island uttered incandescent towers
like frozen simultaneous hymns to trade

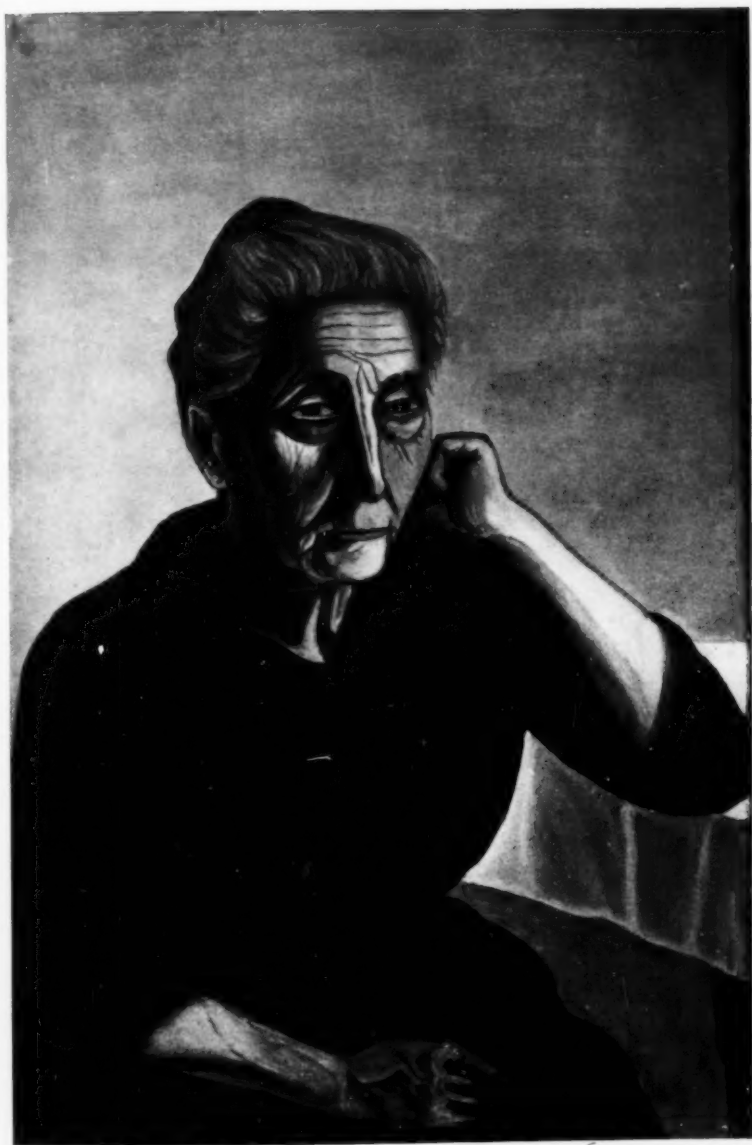
Here, in their lonely multitude of powers
thrones, virtues, archangelic cavalcade
they rise

proclaiming Sea and sky are ours
and yours O man the shadow of our shade

Or did a poet crazed with dignity
rear them upon an island to prolong
his furious contempt for sky and sea

To what emaciated hands belong
these index fingers of infinity

O towers of intolerable song



Courtesy of the Weyhe Gallery

PORTRAIT. BY VINCENT CANADÉ





Courtesy of the Weyhe Gallery
LANDSCAPE WITH POPLARS. BY VINCENT VAN GOGH

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THE FIELD OF MUSTARD

BY A. E. COPPARD

ON a windy afternoon in November they were gathering kindling in the Black Wood—Dinah Lock, Amy Hardwick, and Rose Olliver—three sere disvirgined women from Pollock's Cross. Mrs Lock wore clothes of dull butcher's blue, with a short jacket that affirmed her plumpness, but Rose and Amy had on long grey ulsters. All of them were about forty years old, and the wind and twigs had tousled their gaunt locks for none had a hat upon her head. They did not go far beyond the margin of the wood, for the forest ahead of them swept high over a hill and was gloomy; behind them the slim trunks of beech, set in a sweet ruin of leaf hoar and scattered, and green briar nimbly fluttering, made a sort of palisade against the light of the open, which was grey, and a wide field of mustard which was yellow. The three woman peered up into the trees for dead branches, and when they found any, Dinah Lock, the vivacious woman full of shrill laughter, with a bosom as massive as her haunches, would heave up a rope with an iron bolt tied to one end. The bolted end would twine itself around the dead branch, the three women would tug, and after a sharp crack the quarry would fall; as often as not the women would topple over too. By and by they met an old hedger with a round belly belted low, and thin legs tied at each knee, who told them the time by his ancient watch, a stout timepiece which the women sportively admired.

"Come Christmas I'll have me a watch like that!" Mrs Lock called out. The old man looked a little dazed as he fumblingly replaced his chronometer. "I will," she continued, "if the Lord spares me and the pig don't pine."

"You . . . you don't know what you're talking about," he said. "That watch was my uncle's watch."

"Who was he? I'd like one like it."

"Was a sergeant-major in the lancers, fought under Sir Garnet Wolseley, and it was given to him."

"What for?"

The hedger stopped and turned on them: "Doing of his duty."

"That all?" cried Dinah Lock. "Well, I never got no watch for that a-much. Do you know what I see when I went to London? I see'd a watch in a bowl of water, it was glass, and there was a fish swimming round it . . ."

"I don't believe it."

"There was a fish swimming round it. . . ."

"I tell you I don't believe it. . . ."

"And the little hand was going on like Clackford Mill. That's the sort of watch I'll have me; none of your Sir Garney Wolsey's!"

"He was a noble Christian man, that was."

"Ah! I suppose he slept wid Jesus?" yawped Dinah.

"No, he didn't," the old man disdainfully spluttered. "He never did. What a God's the matter wid ye?" Dinah cackled with laughter. "Pah!" he cried, going away, "Great fat thing! Can't tell your guts from your elbows."

Fifty yards further on he turned and shouted some obscenity back at them, but they did not heed him; they had begun to make three faggots of the wood they had collected, so he put his fingers to his nose at them and shambled out to the road.

By the time Rose and Dinah were ready Amy Hardwick, a small slow silent woman, had not finished bundling her faggot together.

"Come on, Amy," urged Rose.

"Come on," Dinah said.

"All right, wait a minute," she replied listlessly.

"O God, that's death!" cried Dinah Lock, and heaving a great faggot to her shoulders she trudged off followed by Rose with a like burden. Soon they were out of the wood, and crossing a highway they entered a footpath that strayed in a diagonal wriggle to the far corner of the field of mustard. In silence they journeyed until they came to that far corner, where there was a hedged bank. Here they flung their faggots down and sat upon them to wait for Amy Hardwick.

In front of them lay the field they had crossed, a sour scent rising faintly from its yellow blooms that quivered in the wind. Day was dull, the air chill, and the place most solitary. Beyond the field of mustard the eye could see little but forest. There were hills there, a vast curving trunk, but the Black Wood heaved itself effortlessly upon them and lay like a dark pall over the outline of a corpse. Huge and gloomy, the purple woods draped

it all completely. A white necklace of a road curved below, where a score of telegraph poles, each crossed with a multitude of white florets, were dwarfed by the hugeness to effigies that resembled hyacinths. Dinah Lock gazed upon this scene whose melancholy, and not its grandeur, had suddenly invaded her; with elbows sunk in her fat thighs, and nursing her cheeks in her hands, she puffed the gloomy air, saying:

"O God, cradle and grave is all there is for we."

"Where's Amy got to?" asked Rose.

"I could never make a companion of her, you know," Dinah declared.

"Nor I," said Rose, "she's too sour and slow."

"Her disposition's too serious. Of course, your friends are never what you want them to be, Rose. Sometimes they're better—most often they're worse. But it's such a mercy to have a friend at all; I like you, Rose; I wish you was a man."

"I might just as well ha' been," returned the other woman.

"Well, you'd ha' done better; but if you had a tidy little family like me you'd wish you hadn't got 'em."

"And if you'd never had 'em you'd ha' wished you had."

"Rose, that's the cussedness of nature, it makes a mock of you, I don't believe it's the Almighty at all, Rose. I'm sure it's the devil, Rose. Dear heart, my corn's a-giving me what-for; I wonder what that bodes?"

"It's restless weather," said Rose. She was dark, tall, and not unbeautiful still, though her skin was harsh and her limbs angular. "Get another month or two over—there's so many of these long dreary hours."

"Ah, your time's too long, or it's too short, or it's just right, but you're too old. Cradle and grave's my portion. Fat old thing! he called me."

Dinah's brown hair was ruffled across her pleasant face and she looked a little forlorn, but corpulence dispossessed her of tragedy. "I be thin enough a-summertimes for I lives light and sweats like a bridesmaid, but winters I'm fat as a hog."

"What all have you to grumble at then?" asked Rose, who had slid to the ground and lay on her stomach staring up at her friend.

"My heart's young, Rose."

"You've your husband."

"He's no man at all since he was ill. A long time ill, he was.

When he coughed, you know, his insides come up out of him like coffee grouts. Can you ever understand the meaning of that? Coffee! I'm growing old, but my heart's young."

"So is mine, too; but you got a family, four children grown or growing." Rose had snapped off a sprig of the mustard flower and was pressing and pulling the bloom in and out of her mouth. "I've none, and never will have." Suddenly she sat up, fumbled in her pocket, and produced her purse. She slipped the elastic band from it and it gaped open. There were a few coins there and a scrap of paper folded. Rose took out the paper and smoothed it open under Dinah's curious gaze. "I found something lying about at home the other day, and I cut this bit out of it." In soft tones she began to read:

"The day was void, vapid; time itself seemed empty. Come evening it rained softly. I sat by my fire turning over the leaves of a book, and I was dejected, until I came upon a little old-fashioned engraving at the bottom of a page. It imaged a procession of some angelic children in a garden, little placidly-naked substantial babes, with tiny bird-wings. One carried a bow, others a horn of plenty, or a hamper of fruit, or a set of reed-pipes. They were garlanded and full of grave joys. And at the sight of them a strange bliss flowed into me such as I had never known, and I thought this world was all a garden, though its light was hidden and its children not yet born."

Rose did not fold the paper up, she crushed it in her hand and lay down again without a word.

"Huh, I tell you, Rose, a family's a torment. I never wanted mine. God love, Rose, I'd lay down my life for 'em; I'd cut myself into fourpenny pieces so they shouldn't come to harm; if one of 'em was to die I'd sorrow to my grave. But I know, I know; I know I never wanted 'em, they were not for me, I was just an excuse for their blundering into the world. Somehow I've been duped, and every woman born is duped so, one ways or another in the end. I had my sport with my man, but I ought never to have married. Now I'd love to begin all over again, and as God's my maker, if it weren't for those children, I'd be gone off out into the world again to-morrow, Rose. But I dunno what 'ud become o' me."

The wind blew strongly athwart the yellow field, and the odour of mustard rushed upon the brooding women. Protestingly the breeze flung itself upon the forest; there was a gliding cry among the rocking pinions as of some lost wave seeking a forgotten shore. The angular faggot under Dinah Lock had begun to vex her; she too sank to the ground and lay beside Rose Olliver, who asked:

"And what 'ud become of your old man?"

For a few moments Dinah Lock paused. She, too, took a sprig of the mustard and fondled it with her lips. "He's no man now, the illness feebled him, and the virtue's gone; no man at all since two years, and bald as a piece of cheese—I like a hairy man, like . . . do you remember Rufus Blackthorn, used to be gamekeeper here?"

Rose stopped playing with her flower. "Yes, I knew Rufus Blackthorn."

"A fine bold man that was! Never another like him hereabouts, nor in England neither; not in the whole world—though I've heard some queer talk of those foreigners, Australians, Chinyemen. Well!"

"Well?" said Rose.

"He was a devil." Dinah Lock began to whisper. "A perfect devil; I can't say no fairer than that, I wish I could, but I can't."

"O come," protested Rose, "he was a kind man. He'd never see anybody want for a thing."

"No," there was playful scorn in Dinah's voice, "he'd shut his eyes first!"

"Not to a woman he wouldn't, Dinah."

"Ah! Well—perhaps—he was good to women."

"I could tell you things as would surprise you," murmured Rose.

"You! But—well—no, no. I could tell *you* things as you wouldn't believe. Me and Rufus! We was—O my—yes!"

"He *was* handsome."

"Oh, a pretty man!" Dinah acceded warmly. "Black as coal and bold as a fox. I'd been married nigh on ten years when he first set foot in these parts. I'd got three children then. He used to give me a saucy word whenever he saw me, for I liked him and he knew it. One Whitsun Monday I was home all alone, the children were gone somewheres, and Tom was away boozing. I was putting some plants in our garden—I loved a good flower in

those days—I wish the world was all a garden, but now my Tom he digs 'em up, digs everything up proper and never puts 'em back. Why, we had a crocus, once! And as I was doing that planting someone walked by the garden, in such a hurry. I looked up and there was Rufus, all dressed up to the nines, and something made me call out to him. 'Where be you off to in that flaming hurry,' I says. 'Going to a wedding,' says he. 'Shall I come with 'ee?' I says. 'Ah yes,' he says, very glad, 'but hurry up for I be sharp set and all.' So I run in-a-doors and popped on my things and off we went to Jim Pickering's wedding over at Clackford Mill. When Jim brought the bride home from church that Rufus got hold of a gun and fired it off up chimney, and down come soot, the bushels of it! All over the room, and a chimney pot burst and rattled down the tiles into a prambulator. What a rumbullion that was! But no one got angry—there was plenty of drink and we danced all the afternoon. Then we come home together again through the woods. O Lord—I said to myself—I shan't come out with you ever again, and that's what I said to Rufus Blackthorn. But I did, you know! I woke up in bed that night and the moon shone on me dreadful—I thought the place was afire. But there was Tom snoring, and I lay and thought of me and Rufus in the wood, till I could have jumped out into the moonlight, stark, and flown over the chimney. I didn't sleep any more. And I saw Rufus the next night, and the night after that, often, often. Whenever I went out I left Tom the cupboardful—that's all he troubled about. I was mad after Rufus, and while that caper was on I couldn't love my husband. No."

"No?" queried Rose.

"Well, I pretended I was ill, and I took my young Katey to sleep with me, and give Tom her bed. He didn't seem to mind, but after a while I found he was gallavantiing after other women. Course, I soon put a stopper on that. And then—what do you think? Bless me if Rufus weren't up to the same tricks! Deep as the sea, that man. Faithless, you know, but such a bold one."

Rose lay silent, plucking wisps of grass; there was a wry smile on her face.

"Did ever he tell you the story of the man who was drowned?" she asked at length. Dinah shook her head. Rose continued. "Before he came here he was keeper over in that Oxfordshire, where

the river goes right through the woods, and he slept in a boathouse moored to the bank. Some gentleman was drowned near there, an accident it was, but they couldn't find the body. So they offered a reward of ten pounds for it to be found . . ."

"Ten, ten pounds!"

"Yes. Well all the watermen said the body wouldn't come up for ten days . . ."

"No more they do."

"It didn't. And so late one night—it was moonlight—some men in a boat kept on hauling and poking round the house where Rufus was, and he heard 'em say 'It must be here, it must be here,' and Rufus shouts out to them, 'Course he's here! I got him in bed with me!'"

"Aw!" chuckled Dinah.

"Yes, and next day he got the ten pounds, because he *had* found the body and hidden it away."

"Feared nothing," said Dinah, "nothing at all, he'd have been rude to Satan. But he was very delicate with his hands, sewing and things like that. I used to say to him, 'Come let me mend your coat,' or whatever it was, but he never would, always did such things of himself. 'I don't allow no female to patch my clothes,' he'd say, 'cos they works with a red-hot needle and a burning thread.' And he used to make fine little slippers, out of reeds."

"Yes," Rose concurred, "he made me a pair."

"You!" Dinah cried. "What—were you . . . ?"

Rose turned her head away. "We was all cheap to him," she said softly, "cheap as old rags; we was like chaff before him."

Dinah Lock lay still, very still, ruminating; but whether in old grief or new rancour Rose was not aware, and she probed no further. Both were quiet, voiceless, recalling the past delirium. They shivered, but did not rise. The wind increased in the forest, its hoarse breath sorrowed in the yellow field, and swift masses of cloud flowed and twirled in a sky without end and full of gloom.

"Hallo!" cried a voice, and there was Amy beside them, with a faggot almost overwhelming her. "Shan't stop now," she said, "for I've got this faggot perched just right, and I shouldn't ever get it up again. I found a shilling in the 'ood, you," she continued shrilly and gleefully. "Come along to my house after tea and we'll have a quart of stout."

"A shilling, Amy!" cried Rose.

"Yes," called Mrs Hardwick, trudging steadily on. "I tried to find the fellow to it, but no more luck. Come and wet it after tea!"

"Rose," said Dinah, "come on." She and Rose with much circumstance heaved up their faggots and tottered after, but by then Amy was turned out of sight down the little lane to Pollock's Cross.

"Your children will be home," said Rose as they went along, "they'll be looking out for you."

"Ah, they'll want their bellies filling!"

"It must be lovely a-winter's nights, you setting round your fire with 'em, telling tales, and brushing their hair."

"Ain't you got a fire of your own indoors," grumbled Dinah.

"Yes."

"Well, why don't you set by it then!" Dinah's faggot caught the briars of a hedge that overhung, and she tilted round with a mild oath. A covey of partridges feeding beyond scurried away with ruckling cries. One foolish bird dashed into the telegraph wires and dropped dead.

"They're good children, Dinah, yours are. And they make you a valentine, and give you a ribbon on your birthday, I expect?"

"They're naught but a racket from cockcrow till the old man snores—and then it's worse!"

"Oh, but the creatures, Dinah!"

"You . . . you got your quiet trim house, and only your man to look after, a kind man, and you'll set with him in the evenings and play your dominoes or your draughts, and he'll look at you—the nice man—over the board, and stroke your hand now and again."

The wind hustled the two women closer together, and as they stumbled under their burdens Dinah Lock stretched out a hand and touched the other woman's arm. "I like you, Rose, I wish you was a man."

Rose did not reply. Again they were quiet, voiceless, and thus in fading light they came to their homes. But how windy, dispossessed, and ravaged, roved the darkening world! Clouds were borne frantically across the heavens, as if in a rout of battle, and the lovely earth seemed to sigh in grief at some calamity all unknown to men.



PORTRAIT. BY EGON SCHIELE



A DRAWING. BY EGON SCHIELE





A DRAWING. BY EGON SCHIELE

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PARIS LETTER

June, 1925

I SPENT ten days in Russia last month, and this will be, after a fashion, a Moscow letter. Modern Russia is a kind of American Asia. It is certainly no longer Europe. Besides, the word Eurasia, to designate a new continent, born after the deluge, is in fashion there. Among the elementary facts which must be told at the start: There is no closer relation between the capitalist world and the communist world than there is between day and night. There are boots and clothing typically communist just as there are looks, voices, and gestures typically capitalist. The man who works to earn money, to pass it on to his children, to invest it or spend it as he likes, obviously does not have the same eye, nor within that eye the same thoughts, as the man who labours for a daily wage. Let this be said with all impartiality. A storyteller must be engaged by all the differences he notes upon the earth, since his work grows so much the richer for them. Here, then, are some reflections on Russia, written down as they occurred—haphazard.

I have observed that the United States enjoys great prestige in Russia, a prestige of modern power and of material order. Next, France, in the realm of the arts, is the object of a lively attention on the part of the Soviets. Certainly, the cultivated and *bourgeois* generations for which French was a second language have disappeared; but Paris, to the Soviet painters and musicians, remains nevertheless the great city for the initiation of talent.

The most interesting art in Russia appears to me to be sculpture. In painting, there is the good and the very bad. But Western painting has progressed since 1914 in a manner which the Russians seem to ignore, for they are not yet beyond cubism. Picasso, Braque, Léger are best known by work of theirs which dates from 1914. The old private collections, like those of the two mill-owners of Moscow, Morosov and Stchukine, known under the name of Museums of Occidental Painting, contain the essentials (except Manet) of French art since 1870. Our Luxembourg

Museum cannot be compared with them in distinction and richness. The collections of the Hermitage, at Leningrad, are in a perfect state of preservation, enriched by the collections of the Czar and the grand dukes, especially in porcelains, pottery, and jewellery; at Moscow the Museum of Gifts to the Emperor, learnedly directed by M Ivanoff, contains primitive Russian and Byzantine textiles of perfect freshness, as well as Asiatic arms of incomparable value. Finally, the restorations of architecture, and particularly of frescos and icons, are undertaken with the most modern technique and the most infallible taste. The icons cease to be bits of charcoal smudged by tapers, and become admirable miniatures worthy of the Persians. Almost everywhere in the Kremlin, beneath the oil wash of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, there are frescos of the greatest beauty dating from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

The Museums are much frequented by a population very eager for instruction, and it is difficult to get about in them on a Sunday.

The art of the theatre has preserved all its prestige in Soviet Russia. This is well known. All the Russians go to the theatre several times a week. The shows are widely varied—from the Grand Opera of Moscow, where the ballet is remarkable, to the advanced theatres, like that of Meyerhold, or the theatres of propaganda, like that of the Revolution or the Atheist Theatre (The Kamerny Theatre is too well known in New York for me to speak of it); but they do not differ perceptibly from those one can see at Paris or at Milan. Theatrical technique continues to parallel that of Reinhardt and of Craig. Scenes on different planes, lighting with search-lights or tubes, simultaneous scenes, the influence of the motion picture—all is made use of without one's recoiling before any audacity. The plays themselves appeared to me second-rate. Many adaptations from the French, or modernized classical revivals. The actors are usually excellent, or much superior to Western actors in equipment, intensity of performance, a feeling for their *rôles*, and their skill at make-up. The houses are always full. No one dresses. The women wear the blouse and scarf of the lower classes, the men sweaters or khaki shirts. They listen attentively, seldom applaud, and do not laugh. All this public is very young. There are hardly any old

people in Russia. I have often asked where the old people have gone. No one is able to answer me. Political life, which begins at eighteen, is prepared for in various technical classes, where the attention is devoted to the trades, the applied arts, military life, and—always—propaganda. One can say that disinterested art, art considered as an occupation of leisure, already condemned by the sociological schools of our countries, is in Russia considered as an appendage of *bourgeois* culture and irrevocably condemned. Every artist must serve the cause of the proletariat. An exceedingly strict censorship of works of art and literature allows no latitude in this respect. I have been told that the utilization of cubism by the ruling Bolsheviks, which was sufficiently accentuated in the first periods of the Revolution, is diminishing perceptibly. Nevertheless, there still exist trains of propaganda painted by hand, and also anti-religious propaganda in the street-cars. The results of the latter must be fruitful, for the churches are empty; at least, those were which I saw in the towns. The arts of the poster, of the motion picture, and of photography have reached a high degree of perfection. Russian photographic trickeries are astounding in their variety and invention.

I have not space in which to speak of poetry and the novel. I shall try to speak of them at another time. In spite of great isolated talents, I think one can say that the Russian Revolution, as important an event in the history of the world as the French Revolution or the Reformation, has not yet yielded its harvest in art and literature. Yet there is talk of financial credit to the Soviets; is it not fitting, in this respect, to extend them moral credit also, and to be contented to wait?

My last letter to *THE DIAL*, in answer to the New York World, has brought me a reply from Mr Ernest Boyd. Nothing is more tiresome than polemic: readers are quick to forget what it is about, and they are not wrong. In short, the severity of Mr Ernest Boyd, whose antipathy for all post-war literature is well known, has now, after his encounter with Larbaud, been trained upon me. That Mr Boyd scarcely mentions Joyce in the first edition of his *Ireland's Literary Renaissance*, and considers him, as well as Proust, as a scandalous and second-rate writer, is his right and not

my quarrel. But when Mr Boyd, who prides himself on a profound knowledge of our literature, accuses me of devoting a disproportionate part of my articles in *THE DIAL* to the books of the *Nouvelle Revue Française*, I will reply that it is there, all the same, that most of the young talent is to be found—and that foreigners, particularly our most cultivated and attentive neighbours, the Germans, the Belgians, and the Swiss, do not deceive themselves in this matter (to the extent that certain libraries of Zurich and Brussels have no other books but those of the *Nouvelle Revue Française*, a periodical to which Mr Boyd appears to me, since February last, to be the best contributor. As for the personal argument which gives the impression that I reserve my praises for my own publisher, it is not in very good taste; and I may add that it is false, for I left the *Nouvelle Revue Française* two years ago. I recall moreover that the attacks of the journalist Béraud upon the *Nouvelle Revue Française*, to which Mr Boyd makes allusion as a present fact, go back equally more than two years, and that there is no longer any discussion of them in Paris. To be a prophet outside one's own country and literature is excellent, but one must at least keep up with the news. Mr Boyd is not so up-to-date as he thinks.

I will cite among the new books, first of all (to enrage Mr Boyd) *L'Honorable Partie de Campagne*, by M Thomas Raucat, published by the *Nouvelle Revue Française*—the charming adventure of a Frenchman in Japan. By its freshness (it is a first book) and its knowledge of Japanese customs, it has achieved for the moment, a most lively success in Paris.

The Jewish vogue to which I have previously drawn attention continues; M Pierre Benoit gives us an interesting Jewish novel in *Le Puits de Jacob*, the scene of which is laid in Palestine. M François Mauriac, in *Le Désert de l'Amour*, has written a novel and beautiful romance, in a grave and solemn tone, on the drama of a provincial French family. The poet Blaise Cendrars has published *L'Or*, an American story which is very remarkable. I note the first appearance of a young writer, M Henry Poulaille, in *Ils Etaient Quatre*, which will make him talked about. The publisher Kra issues, in addition to *L'Orgie à St Pétersbourg*, by

André Salmon, a very remarkable *Anthologie de la Jeune Poésie Française*.

We observe with pleasure the increasing number of German artists and writers in Paris. After Fritz von Unruh, here are Hoffmannsthal and Annette Kolb. We have among us Rainer Maria Rilke, the greatest contemporary German lyric poet. It is to be hoped that this reconciliation between good Europeans is the prelude to normal and fertile intellectual relations between France and Germany, countries separated, after all, by nothing fundamental in the realm of beauty and of truth.

PAUL MORAND

BOOK REVIEWS

THE DEAD "NOVEL"

LUCIENNE. By *Jules Romains*. Translated by *Waldo Frank*. 12mo. 235 pages. Boni and Live-right. \$2.50.

IT has been, I think, a little too often and too lightly said, in the last few years, that the novel, as a literary form, is about to be, or ought to be, or has been, exploded. When Mr Joyce's *Ulysses* appeared there was a particularly loud chorus of this sort. "What now," cried the joyful critics, "is left of the novel? What now is left of naturalism?" It was suggested that no realistic novelist in his senses would presume, after a careful scrutiny of giant Leopold, to try his hand again at any mere painting of a full-length portrait. Well, giant Leopold is an astounding phenomenon, and *Ulysses* is a magnificent book; but I do not see why or how this should interdict the writing of novels. Is it urged that we must all (if indeed henceforth we use prose narrative at all) write satirical epics four hundred thousand words long, and that no other "form" can be, for the modern consciousness, adequate?

The view is a little extreme. It is one thing to note a contemporary disposition to experiment with the form and aim of prose narrative; and quite another to pronounce the novel dead. To those young critics who are always in such an Elizabethan hurry to make corpses and rush them off the stage, it might well be observed that the novel can with difficulty be called dead till we know what it is. What is it that *Ulysses* has slain? Is it *The Old Wives' Tale*? or *Sons and Lovers*? or *The Death of a Nobody*? or *L'Ile des Pingouins*? or *Lord Jim*? or *The Brook Kerith*? Perhaps our young critic had something less recent in mind. Perhaps he was thinking of such outworn and unpopular books as *The Wings of the Dove* or *The Awkward Age*. Or was it the old-fashioned works of Dostoevsky? But perhaps none of these are

quite what he meant by the novel. It may have been Thackeray or Dickens or Trollope; it may have been Fielding. Who knows? It may even have been Oroonoko or Don Quixote or The Golden Ass.

The truth is, the term novel is practically useless as a *definition*—it marks no limits. The works just mentioned are all novels in the sense that they all, to some degree, purport to tell a story about fictitious persons; but beyond that, the likeness becomes faint. There are no canons for the novel. The novelist, so long as he remains interesting, can do what he likes. How much he can dispense, for example, with mere story, or narrative speed, Tristram Shandy and Ulysses equally and diversely testify. He can choose the orderly, precise, detached synthesis of Madame Bovary, or the "other world" beauty, the absolute music, of The Golden Bowl and The Idiot. Whatever mode he chooses he will impregnate deeply, if he is successful, with his own character. The novel is the novelist's inordinate and copious lyric: he explores himself, and sings while he explores, like the grave-digger. And what we get at, in all this, is simply the fact that at any given moment a hundred novels might be written, each of them in its way as individual as Ulysses, each as much a departure from the common denominator, and each therefore a "fatal blow" to the "novel." Why not? Here, for example, is M Romain's *Lucienne*. It goes its own way, quite unruffled. It is not a great novel—it is not aimed at greatness. It is deliberately kept small, minor, and exquisite. Except for references to "interior monologue," one would not guess that it was written in the shadow of so large a natural object as Leopold Bloom. Mr Waldo Frank, in the excellent preface to his excellent (but sometimes too mannered) translation, remarks that it belongs to the French "mystic" tradition; but this is pretty vague; and for the most part *Lucienne* shows no striking affinities with any particular tradition; its affinities are too general and dispersed. It does not date, like M Romain's *Death of a Nobody*. The latter, with its lightly conscious exploitation of certain very modern scientific or pseudo-scientific ideas about crowd behaviour, belongs to its decade. It is also a more obviously original variation on, or departure from, the "story" tradition of the novel. *Lucienne* deviates less from—let us say loosely—the Turgenev tradition; it is, in essentials, an orderly and simple love-

story. But it is as good an example as one could find of the fact that no tradition can ever be dead.

Mr Frank speaks of the "terror and mystery" of M Romain's "vision," and of his doctrine of *unanimité*; the latter he calls a "mystical monism," and declares to be "one of the truly great triumphs of modern literary art." Can a doctrine be said to be a triumph of literary art? This is not very precise, and I think also that Mr Frank takes *unanimité* a shade too seriously. The French are very fond of selecting one little corner of a familiar truth, giving it a new name with a scientific tinge, and thus starting a "new movement." A few good works may result from this naked application of an idea (like a recipe) and *The Death of a Nobody* is an exception of that sort. But I suspect that *unanimité* is little more than a trade-mark. One regrets that so able a writer as M Romain should find necessary that kind of mythopoeia. In *Lucienne*, at all events, the *unanimité*, or the "terror and mystery" of the "mystical monism," amount simply to the fact that M Romain tells a love-story skilfully and directly, with a very exceptional degree of poetic insight and intensity. He is a first-rate psychologist; and his analysis, or synthesis, of mood, his awareness of all the fleeting sensory phenomena that precede or accompany it, as well as the hidden counterpoint of association, is often quite extraordinary. Without once stepping outside of *Lucienne's* mind, or once permitting *Lucienne* herself to be explicitly conscious on the point, he gives us a young woman who is in that ecstatic state of passage from introversion to extraversion which marks (though in the absence of an object) the condition of "being about to fall in love." This is done with great beauty, and so is the account of *Lucienne's* slow interfusion with the *Barbelenet* family: the difference of impact is, with each personality, subtly and exquisitely discovered. The description of the first meeting is, indeed, masterly. Looking back on that scene, after one has finished the book, one would swear that it consisted entirely of dialogue, so distinctly does one hear the echo of voices and see the whole shape and colour of the family discourse. Nevertheless, there are only two brief speeches in the scene. M Romain does the thing simply by going *under* the dialogue, and giving the successive affective responses of his heroine.

It will be said, rightly, that there is nothing new in this. The

point to be emphasized is that M Romain makes this traditional method peculiarly his own. The moments, the scenes—or what James called the “joints”—of his story are very few, very simple. They are not calculated for any largeness of effect. They are sufficient, because M Romain brings to each of them an absorbed and exquisite consciousness. He occupies every corner of his heroine’s awareness—and if he endows her sometimes with an awareness that amounts to genius, nevertheless he never makes her monologue improbable. The real beauty of the story is precisely in this flowing consciousness. Its quality is peculiarly *exciting*; it is intense and simple, it is at the same time deep and lucid; one is astonished that in a narrative stream so limpid, so much should be *given*. One has the sensation, now and then, of falling through plane below plane of reality, and of discovering new subliminal hierarchies in the order of things. The first meeting with the Barbelenets is a fine example of this quality of imagination, but even finer are the descriptions of the first music lesson and the playing of the duet. These passages, in sheer poetic intensity and immersion in the actual, are the best in the book, and rival, if they do not surpass, the scene in the diligence in *The Death of a Nobody*. The character, the life, of Marthe’s hands is found with a prescience that makes one almost uncomfortable. And the subterranean mingling of the two personalities playing the duet is of that sharpness and richness in analysis of mood and sensation that gives one the illusion of having discovered a new mode of apprehension.

That, of course, is a quality for which one goes to poetry. M Romain is above all a poet, and it is primarily for his lyric intensity of consciousness that one enjoys him. And we can also be grateful to him for reminding us that the “novel” is far from dead when the simplest of stories can thus, by a very slight alteration in the angle of light, become a new experience.

CONRAD AIKEN

THE NOTORIOUS STEPHEN BURROUGHS

MEMOIRS OF THE NOTORIOUS STEPHEN BURROUGHS
OF NEW HAMPSHIRE. *With a Preface by Robert
Frost. 8vo. 367 pages. Lincoln Mac Veagh: The
Dial Press. \$4.*

THE deadliest blight of Puritanism was its anxiety to save its soul at all costs, and meanwhile to appear respectable in the eyes of its neighbours. The genius of Stephen Burroughs resides in his inclusion of these wholly personal ambitions in his general contempt for the prejudices current in his day. Born at Hanover, New Hampshire, about 1762, the son of a Presbyterian minister, he turned out a runaway, a pantheist, a marauder of bee-hives, a jailbird, a counterfeiter, a seducer, a hypocritical preacher, a vexation to the community and to God's indulgence: and ended, instead of on the gallows, in the comfortable bosom of the Holy Catholic Church. He was the scandal of his time, and if he indeed achieved redemption at the last, it may be surmised that his repentant soul winging to the Judgement Seat was greeted with more apprehension than jubilation by those sober New England souls that had preceded it within the Pearly Gates. Yet Stephen Burroughs, as he is projected after a century and a half against the *milieu* into which he was born, is seen to have been an original and daring spirit, a perfectly logical product of his environment, and in a sense a bitterly significant clinical case in American character. He was, moreover, amusing, irrepressibly vigorous, strangely thwarted, and not without nobility; and our appreciation of this perverse medley which was a man ascends, in the reading of his confessions, as the wrath of the good folk of New England becomes tumultuous against him and as his hopes of the Calvinist Paradise become remote.

We have said that Stephen Burroughs was "strangely thwarted" in life, and in this malevolent circumstance we have the key to his perverse and extraordinary character. Born under a more indulgent star, in a more favourable land, he might have become great. But in any case he would have been a public nuisance.

for he was a born impostor, an instinctive protestant, an incorrigible searcher-out of trouble, a "naïve hypocrite." A more liberal society would have known better how to assimilate his prodigious energies, his inexhaustible invention, his passion for movement and excitement. But Puritan New England afforded him no outlet. "I was educated in all the rigour of that order (Presbyterianism), which illy suited my volatile, impatient temper of mind; this being the case, my first entrance on the stage of life was by no means agreeable." At the age of fourteen he twice enlisted with the Revolutionary army, and twice his father obtained his discharge: the only occasion he had to turn his mountainous spleen to public good was squandered upon Greek verbs. At sixteen, after a succession of innocent enough pranks, he was obliged to quit Dartmouth College because of his differences with the excellent Ripley. Unable to content himself at home, within a year he had run away to sea on a packet carrying letters of marque. Being a provident and ambitious lad, he had taken the precaution of providing himself with an assortment of simple specifics, the curative properties of each being carefully noted; so he sailed, not as the cabin-boy of romance, but as ship's surgeon. On the voyage he participated in the capture of a merchant prize and in the defeat of a British lugger, whereafter he dressed the wounds of the victims. His patients survived; nevertheless, having incurred the enmity of the first mate, he returned in chains and was thrown into prison on a false charge.

Thus Stephen Burroughs' acquaintance with adversity was begun. His was a character that irritated, that rubbed the community against the grain; and his effrontery was beyond belief. He was possessed of a veritable genius for getting into trouble; and when he was not himself at fault, the tale-bearing animosity of his old neighbours was only too eager to pursue him and to make his offenses appear worse than they actually were. He became a school-teacher, to lose his position with public disgrace because of the theft of a bee-hive. He experienced a short and disillusioning love-affair with a married woman. Then, lacking a more immediate profession, he filched five of his father's sermons and turned preacher, only to become involved in the practice of fake alchemy and to be presently discountenanced. He tried counterfeiting, was apprehended, and spent three horrible years in prison. He

tunnelled his way to liberty, but was discovered, horse-whipped, and confined in chains. He burned the jail to free himself, only to be recaptured, lashed almost to death, deprived of food and heat, and thrown into the dungeon. But even these atrocities failed to brutalize or intimidate him. Another attempt, and he was transferred to the notorious military prison on Castle Island. Even in that bleak stronghold he renewed his efforts to escape; and finally, by overpowering a sentry, gained the mainland. Recaptured, he plotted to liberate all the prisoners, overpower the garrison, and hold the island, which commands Boston Harbour. This plan likewise failed. More floggings. Further attempts. Floggings. Starvation. Systematic brutality. Then release, upon the expiration of his term.

When he emerged from prison, Burroughs again attempted to live honestly. He wanted to study law or medicine: either would have been his salvation; but he had no money. He worked at manual labour and at school-teaching, and eventually married the daughter of his friendly uncle, Ebenezer Davis, of Charlton. All seemed well for a while, but again the enmity of his neighbours and of circumstance arose against him. An indiscretion committed before his marriage was magnified; he was accused of rape, and prosecuted with such excessive harshness that the very townsfolk of Worcester broke open the jail and set him at liberty. He rejoined his family on Long Island and again became a schoolmaster, serving in that post for many years with great diligence and discretion. But he could not for ever appease the Philistines. An attempt to establish in his community a library consisting of works other than ecclesiastical proved the means of his making himself more enemies and getting himself into further disgrace. Again the exhuming of the past. Again schemes. Again the complete abandonment of justice and the hand of every prating citizen turned against him. His school abandoned, his furniture sold out of the house where he lived with his wife and their two small children to satisfy a judgement, destitute, he left the community he had served so long, by request.

Burroughs fared better in the South. He speculated in land on credit, earned a profit, was robbed, again became a schoolmaster and later a surveyor of Indian lands, opened a land office in Philadelphia, and in that city conducted a prosperous business until he

was once more ruined by the slander of his old-time neighbours. His father having advanced to a great age, he returned to Hanover, and the fortune which he had amassed in Philadelphia was subsequently lost through the dishonesty of his agent and his own naïveté. For three years, contentment. Here the memoir ends, but we know the rest. Presently the shadow of debt fell upon the old homestead; then ensued uneasiness and mutual crimination. Burroughs went to Canada; and there being at that time no law in Canada forbidding the counterfeiting of the currency of the United States, the expatriate lived in immunity and plenty. We do not know the circumstances under which, in the fullness of his age, he embraced the Roman Catholic faith, but we can have no doubt of the sincerity of his conversion. Our last view of him is as an old man, reconciled with his God and with the angry God within his own heart, spending his last years in pious and scholarly pursuits, far from the wretched community whose implacable resentment had driven him, hunted and homeless, through an unfriendly world.

Such was the career of Stephen Burroughs, a man who might have become great under another star, the shame and reproach of his generation. A wasted life, if you will, but one full of courage and, in a deep sense, symbolical. One does not need to be told that the fault was not with this man, but with the community that bore him unwillingly and without love and pursued him throughout his life with that singularly vile, backbiting, relentless quality of hate that belongs to those whose conception of virtue is founded more upon moral cowardice and the fear of hell than upon the love and pleasure of God. Stephen Burroughs had good reason to hate his miserable neighbours; he did not: therefore he was noble. He fought a good fight against hopeless odds, without fear, without rancour, without vain tears. He was cast down only to rise again. The scapegoat of prejudice, the man who never had a chance, he died as he had lived, standing erect and facing the sun. His name deserves to be enrolled among the saints and heroes of American history.

WILLIAM A. DRAKE

DE SENECTUTE

DOCTOR GRAESLER. *By Arthur Schnitzler. Translated by Paul Bloomfield Zeisler. 12mo. 180 pages. Thomas Seltzer. \$2.50.*

THE hero of Doctor Graesler is the antithesis of the cheery person in Bunyan's couplet:

"A man there was, tho' some did count him mad,
The more he cast away the more he had."

Doctor Graesler, the genteel physician of small watering-places, never had much to cast away in the first place, and after he has cast away that which he had to the extent of some hundred-seventy-five delicately executed pages, he is completely plucked. It is partly the fault of temperament, but the real villain of Schnitzler's story is the subtle and sorry fortieth year. This is not the first time that Schnitzler has essayed the tragedy of senescence, of reluctantly turning forty, but in this short novel he has not to deal with an aging Chevalier de Seingalt, the very name and evocation of whom supplied a certain pictorial and atmospheric advantage to Casanova's *Homecoming*. Doctor Graesler is just a timid, quickly used-up Don Juan who, at the outset of the story, lies comfortably enough between the two stools of his work, done ardently for its own sake, and a furtive, only half-enjoyed pleasure, consisting mainly of memories. On the surface, he is as dull and drab as any one of Ibsen's none the less internally exciting creations; the atmosphere of the story, apart from the overtones it completely lacks, is the atmosphere of Ibsen. The doctor is the archetype of honest, self-respecting, dignified mediocrity; the eternal man in a black coat, "always keeping his gig."

And the setting of Doctor Graesler lacks even the faded charm of the *settecento* Italian towns in the former novel. As in Venice there is water, everywhere, but not a drop (spiritually speaking) to drink. It is a depressing little spa, placed vaguely on the Baltic Sea, and peopled by dull valetudinarians, male and female medi-

ocrities unheroically growing old. Yet even in this discouraging atmosphere the delicate romanticism of the Viennese novelist manifests itself slyly. Over the flats and across this backwater of existence floats faintly the sound of a waltz by Strauss. Those bored chaste sands keep the impress of the cloven hoof. What a printer recently misspelled the *erratic* motive in modern literature trembles in the nervous and sensitized prose. It is so hard to grow old (the novelist seems to tell us) so hard, and so exciting. Turning forty plays strange tricks with the soul and the organism more stimulating than any which accompany the ready-made adventures of youth. Contemplate with the eyes of sympathy those dull sands, sprinkled with unromantic figures in black coats and wheeled chairs, and you discover that beneath the rigid fronts and chaste bosoms, beat the unvanquished instincts of centaurs and nymphs. This novel about an aging doctor is, in a spiritual, but none the less, real sense, the afternoon of a faun.

Only like Mallarmé's faun, he chooses to go to sleep again in the clearing. A life's work has tired him prematurely, and he has become too much the man of umbrellas and coal-fires to love overmuch the open air. Twice the little gods, who arrange these things somewhat in the air, offer him a supreme opportunity to live, and it is twice rejected. The first opportunity presents itself in the person of a girl, Sabine, whom he meets in a medical capacity at the spa. She is beautiful, pure, ardent, the sort of nice girl one meets in the excessively romantic pages of Mr Sinclair Lewis. He loves her; and while he is playing with the supreme hope and half-consciousness that at last he loves truly, ardently, appropriately, and is loved in return, he receives a letter in which she in effect gives herself to him:

"Well then, dear Dr Graesler, dear friend, here I am writing . . . to tell you that I should not take it amiss were you to ask me to be your wife. I feel a great cordial friendship for you such as I have not felt for any human being before. Not love . . . not yet. But something akin to love, something which may well grow into love. During the last days, when you spoke of your impending journey, I had a strange feeling at my heart."

Here, at the point when an American novelette would probably

end, Schnitzler's begins. The fear of being taken in, the eternal distrust of others, above all the distrust of self which sterilizes the activities of a good half of modern humanity, betrays the Doctor at this point. With an unerring psychology, Schnitzler shows him to us writing back that for the present he dare not accept this great gift . . . in a few weeks perhaps . . . that when he comes back he hopes to find everything unchanged . . . and so with a sense of frustration and sick at heart, taking the carriage and leaving the scene of his great gift—in the rain. Schnitzler is past-master at describing all the nuances which go to make up that pathological condition known in homely parlance as "cutting off one's nose to spite one's face."

In his native town, where he goes to await letters from Sabine which never come, the little gods present Doctor Graesler with his second and last opportunity. She is a little shop-girl of humble origin and a not too immaculate past, but to the last degree engaging, sweet, and gay, the most enchanting creation to be found in all the author's gallery of girls. The Doctor (and the author) know all the fluctuations in that sweet tumult which accompanies an affair all the more absorbing for its ambiguity, its slight sense of guilt. . . . "After a while she rose to get supper, and just then the door-bell rang. Graesler started. What could it be? Sabine? He noticed Katharina's eyes upon him questioning but undisturbed. Too undisturbed it struck him. Perhaps she knew something about the visitor. . . . A put-up job? Blackmail? . . . Well, he wouldn't let himself be intimidated. It was not the first time he had been in similar danger."

After living with the shop-girl in a state of unprecedented happiness for over a fortnight, Graesler decides it is time to come to his senses and to take up Sabine like a book he has laid down. There is an affecting parting with the shop-girl, and he goes back. Of course Sabine, having taken his measure, will have none of him, and when, in a rage of desperation and re-stimulated love for the little proletarian, he returns to her, she is on her death-bed. So the poor aging faun has spent the last months of his awakened existence in rebounding back and forth between two experiences, both of which fail him because he had no trust in anything in life, not even in himself. The last pages of the book see him back again at the spa, descending the gangplank, a commonplace

wife beside him, aging like himself, never again to see the white caps on that well-behaved sea taking the form of sirens, nor gleaming figures darting in and out among the dunes. The ultimate autumnal storm has effaced the cloven hoof. It is the complete triumph of Time.

This little story speaks for itself, and if the reader happens to like the *milieu* and the people involved in it, he will have nothing with which to reproach the story. To say: This is not a good novel because aging doctors and invalids and shop-girls do not interest me, is nonsense, and yet, sometimes unconsciously, this is the attitude of nearly all readers and of a great many reviewers. It is comprehensible and human, but it is, none the less, not criticism. The possession of such an attitude toward contemporary fiction is what makes the large amount of current generalization about Russian or German or even American novels extremely dangerous and misleading. When a person says to me: I find the people of Floyd Dell or Waldo Frank or some Muscovite, stimulating and thrilling creations, and the people of Francis Carco and Ring Lardner and Gleason, the playwright, sordid and quotidian, I say: O do you? in the tone of one who has just heard pronounced a preference for boiled tripe and an utter detestation for red wine. Yet, in implying such preferences and rejections, I am putting myself wholly in their position, the position of the servant-girl who will read of nothing but duchesses. Let us then keep our preferences for social *milieux* and social types in the novel to ourselves, and confess that, within its limits, Doctor Graesler is a little work of capital excellence.

CUTHBERT WRIGHT

MR KREYMBORG WOOS AMERICA

TROUBADOUR. *By Alfred Kreymborg. 10mo. 415 pages. Boni and Liveright. \$3.*

ALFRED KREYMBORG deserves more than he has received, of his country. An original craftsman in the aesthetic of the drama, he has been neglected by the American theatre of which he has more claim to be called a founder than Eugene O'Neill. A free, felicitous, versatile adventurer in the forms of the lyric, he has warmed up a public to smile upon such poets as E. E. Cummings. Wherefore one comes to the story of his life with something better than a neutrality of respect. Moreover, Mr Kreymborg's forty years have touched most of the artistic ferment of our epoch. Since the man is a poet and since his career spans what we hope will prove the preface to a significant age, we seek in *Troubadour* a portrait of growths and of excitements.

The early chapters do not let us down. They depict by the good *genre* method a boyhood in the humbler levels of New York. To the reader who knows the Manhattan of the 'nineties or who cares to know it, these pages will have the appeal of a good novel in a perhaps unfortunately demoded manner: of the Victorian novel revived so well by William De Morgan, in which dark corners smile, ample old women glow, dinners smell invitingly, and young girls cast bewitching, inexplicable spells upon young boys. But Mr Kreymborg is not a novelist. One does not demand that he outdo Dickens: and properly grateful that he has done Dickens so well, one passes on.

Mr Kreymborg became a poet; he edited magazines whose rise and fall belong to the history of letters; he produced plays; he trudged from town to town singing his wares at the provincial courts of club-women. He encountered in his pilgrimage other poets, other artists, a rich variance indeed of the men and women who personify America's travail to become spiritually other than it is. This is the stuff of Mr Kreymborg's life; this what one looks to be illumined in his book.

Mr Kreymborg names many names, recounts many events. But

of the analyses that establish, of the distinctions that create, of the fertile pauses between impulse, act, and response whereby the values of experience emerge, his book has few. The historian of letters will find much data here. But no one will go to it to-morrow, as do we to Saint-Simon or Goethe or Henry Adams, for the creation of the essence and temper of a day. Mr Kreymborg seems to have been inhibited by some force either inward or external, from a seizing or even a true confrontation of the rich events and of the persons who impact his world. We read of the making of magazines and anthologies, and receive no dynamic attitude whereby lists would be dimensionalized to life. We know that Mr Kreymborg wrote extraordinary plays; but of their psychic, intellectual, even social genesis we learn in his book no further. We are told that Van Wyck Brooks influenced Mr Kreymborg; but in what way, nothing: that Conrad Aiken and Louis Untermeyer were his adversaries and that the opponents argued; but for the ideas and delineated temperaments whose presence in the book would justify this published gloss to the already published poems of the authors, there is a final silence.

We close Troubadour with the memory of a fine Dickensian threshold, and the sense of an admirable artist to whom the world has been not at all fair and who has been, in this book, not at all fair to himself. Did he venture perhaps too soon *in medias res* and *in medias personas*? Or is there some subtler reason for this failure as judged by the challenge of its author? Why was the book written at all?

It is with the asking of such questions that Troubadour comes at the end, if obliquely, to justify its existence. We do not have in it a mature artist's response in concept and emotion to his world. But even in the book's shortcomings, we possess a document which is indeed a symptom of a significant state.

Mr Kreymborg is a spiritual man whose poetry articulates a lack of contact with his world, and whose autobiography is above all an attempt to bridge that lack. Mr Kreymborg's life in communities of poets has not supplied him with a sufficing counter for his inability as a poet to take part in a more general social scheme. Mr Kreymborg, perhaps unconsciously moved by a persistent hunger, now woos America to take him in.

There is naught impure or insincere about his suit; although

it may be ineffectual and assuredly has pathos. Nor is the chief subject for pathos Mr Kreymborg. A land which finds no use for the sensibilities of this fantastic lover, and provides him neither with satisfactory comrades in his isolation nor with sufficient nurture in himself to do without, is either a pathetic or a tragic land. Much as the social hunger of Mr Kreymborg capering so feately before a dropped lead curtain of inertia and indifference affects one, the imperviousness of our land behind the curtain is more moving. The book's title Troubadour is indeed in this poet's best ironic vein. Troubadour! One thinks of Guilhem, Comte de Poitiers, of Giraut de Bornelh—of the bright galaxy of well-provisioned nobles moving through lands that loved them. Rudel, singing his *princesse lointaine*, had at hand a too warm audience to warm him. His love lived beyond the sea, one feels, because of the fat surfeit of applause at home. But Alfred Kreymborg, neither a prince nor favoured, having made song in vain, is forced to turn to *prose* to win his people's ear.

This is the dramatic kernel of the volume. It reveals the almost indefeasible mechanism of our land for making our poets over into prose; the modern alchemy whereby much gold is transmogrified to lead. Did not Whitman, even, who as a prophet was a true son of troubadours—a troubadour going ahead of his flock—enact prose after his ten years of song? But the process is more salient in our day. I think offhand of Ludwig Lewisohn's *Up Stream*, of Harry Kemp's *Tramping on Life*, of Sherwood Anderson's recent record. These are by men of varying talents. But each of these books marked an explanatory gesture: each, if I mistake not, was the best publisher's success of its respective author; each—and Troubadour along—was either a direct or an inverted wooing.

Mr Anderson's address fared artistically well, since his direct expression is by a similar means of chronicle, and since the blind haze in which his maturity received events was a sort of aesthetic refrain for the glamorous litany of his groping childhood. The point is not lost, however. Mr Anderson has always had to struggle against *recording* as a substitute for creating: and here he is gloriously giving up the battle of the artist and being applauded as his best tales were never!

A strong world creates: a weak one records. A strong *milieu* would have impressed on Messrs Anderson and Kreymborg that

the autobiography of an artist must be a mature positive reaction—barring the sort of thing that one may write, grey-haired, in dotage. Similarly, a strong world would have employed Alfred Kreymborg so dynamically, so exhaustingly, in his *rôle* of dramatist and poet, that he would have had no time for these immature and casual relations.

And this leads to the other revelatory symptom of such books. Mr Kreymborg, lacking contact *qua* creator with his land, is abashed into a hortatory and explanatory mood: and is moreover forced to telling his own tale out loud in order to establish himself to himself. Some violence in the hazards of their fate makes these men doubt themselves—and count their fingers; makes them talk aloud in the dark silence which is the matrix of our electric noise; makes them talk as children rather than work as artists. No sure man would have ignored the challenge of his "life" to drop the kindliness of comment which mars Troubadour, and replace it with athletic analytic lines. Only a subjective immaturity can explain the sugared gruel of literary reminiscence which the last chapters of Troubadour pour down the public's throat.

So the documents pile up. We are in a pre-scriptural age and must expect this. Troubadour is not of the first chapter in an American Genesis, as some of us hoped it might be. It is not incarnate enough of conscious creative will. It is not of the lineage of The Education of Henry Adams. But it has words and drifts of spirit which the ultimate writers of our Bible will appropriate in their hour.

WALDO FRANK

BRIEFER MENTION

MR TASKER'S GODS, by T. F. Powys (12mo, 312 pages; Knopf: \$2.50).

For those fastidious connoisseurs, lovers of all the strange growths of certain gnarled tree-like minds, whose "branchéd thoughts new-grown with pleasant pain . . . murmur in the wind," Mr Tasker's Gods will be a veritable delight. For the book contains every one of those astringent bark-bitter juices that make up the curious sap of Mr Powys' inventions. It contains his loathing for the well-constituted; his chuckling goblinish humour, embodied, for instance in *Mrs Fancy And Her Furniture*; his ghoulish prying in the hearts of the wicked; his sorrowful idealization of the hearts of the good; and, finally, that secretive, convoluted recognition of certain kinds of brutality in the world, like a rumour of terrible ooze-monsters heard in the hollows of a twisted shell.

ORPHAN ISLAND, by Rose Macaulay (12mo, 319 pages; Boni & Liveright:

\$2). The fragments of Queen Victoria left by Mr Lytton Strachey are here pounded into rather vulgar dust; there now seems nothing left of the once sainted figure. Miss Macaulay's fictitious island-community in the South Seas provides a mildly amusing burlesque of English society, but as it scratches only on the surface of life it cannot make a deep impression upon the mind.

HUMPTY DUMPTY, by Ben Hecht (12mo, 383 pages; Boni & Liveright: \$2)

is a Chicago excursion into the super-Mencken subconscious; to read it is like eating eggshells. Mr Hecht set out to chronicle the adventures of a pin-wheel among pin-heads, and by the time his hero is thirty, he has read everything, thought everything, and experienced everything—and Mr Hecht has said everything. A Simon Legree in cynical top-boots, he kicks the conventions into insensibility and continues to lash their inert bodies with the whip of a brilliant prose until the performance ceases to be cruel and becomes simply monotonous. No doubt the world needs to be laughed at, but to be effective, mockery should be administered in smaller doses.

LITTLE NOVELS OF SICILY, by Giovanni Verga, translated by D. H. Lawrence

(12mo, 226 pages; Seltzer: \$2) presents a veritable panorama of poverty. Individually, each tale has its own lights and shadows, but together they form a dun-coloured vista, like the vegetation along the dust-choked roads of southern Italy. Most of these sketches are believed to be drawn from the life of the village where Verga lived; they have been transcribed with no adornment save that of a biting irony. Ignorance and privation and superstition are the three graces who preside over the destinies of men and women and mules "in this world where one hand washes the other," and from their ministrations the author weaves minor Greek tragedies. Mr Lawrence's translation is good fortune for the reader no less than for the author.

THE CONSTANT NYMPH, by Margaret Kennedy (12mo, 344 pages; Doubleday, Page: \$2) is an adventure among masterpieces of characterization; not a single figure is slighted and not one is sand-papered off by the author to make its rough edges more soothing to the touch of the conventional mind. Miss Kennedy's novel is about musicians who are interpreted in the light of their own gifts, not as so many mountebanks endowed by the gods with talents which render them acceptable to the fashionable world which goes to concerts. Such talk—pungent, brilliant, and rich in observation—has not been garnered within the covers of one book for a long time; its emotional and dramatic values are equally authentic. A novel head and shoulders above the ruck of fiction.

THE DARK CLOUD, by Thomas Boyd (12mo, 267 pages; Scribner: \$2) projects a picture of life with camera sharpness, and yet the outlines of it have been so softened by tones of understanding that the effect is in no sense photographic. Mr Boyd has sought and successfully recaptured the picturesque background of early steamboat days along the Mississippi; he has written a narrative of incident rather than of sustained plot, done in flexible and vigorous prose. It is chiefly interesting as a prose panorama, sweeping from Quebec to Detroit, across to Cincinnati, and down the great waterway as it was in the enthralling fifties of the last century.

YOUNG MRS CRUSE, by Viola Meynell (12mo, 272 pages; Harcourt, Brace: \$2) turns the leaves of people's emotions reminiscently, like thumbing an album. Miss Meynell composes in a mood of warm tranquillity, avoiding rather than seeking climax, so that her stories are handled with an unvarying detachment. When occasion requires, she is sympathetic, but never partisan. She has, in a word, the faculty of seeming to involve the reader rather more closely with the lives of her characters than she allows herself to be—an art in itself. Each of the half-dozen tales in this volume has distinction.

THE BANQUET AND OTHER POEMS, by Frances Fletcher (12mo, 44 pages; Dorrance: \$2). Presenting the paradox of the pond lily's whiteness blurred by shadows, the simplicity of the complex mood which is appreciative yet ardent in escape, aloof and alluring in their sleights of swift precision, these poems possess depth of experience, sensitiveness to thought, and power of observation, which are not contradicted by definite defects in thought and treatment.

POETRY FROM THE BIBLE, edited by Lincoln MacVeagh (16mo, 180 pages; Lincoln MacVeagh, The Dial Press: \$1.50). As Mr MacVeagh suggests, an anthology of the Bible is not the Bible. The twenty-fifth and the one-hundred-fourth psalms have in this instance been omitted, and sometimes disassociation from the grandeur of the setting detracts from the essential magnitude of what is quoted. One must in every case be sensible, however, of the splendour of the famous passages assembled here, of the careful choice of version, of now a metrical, and now a prose arrangement, of the compact magnificence of this small volume.

AN ANTHOLOGY OF PURE POETRY, edited with an introduction by George Moore (12mo, 182 pages; Boni & Liveright: \$2). In accordance with Mr Moore's definition of pure poetry as "something that the poet creates outside of his own personality," we have in this anthology—abstinent in purport and exquisite in content—beauty that cannot be encountered too often. Some of the best work of the poets here represented is not without what Mr Moore has termed "subjective taint"; therefore, we must regard the anthologist's rigour as abundance, prefaced as it is by the poetically autobiographic prose of the introduction, which would in itself make the volume a valuable acquisition.

MRS MEYNELL AND HER LITERARY GENERATION, by Anne Kimball Tuell (12mo, 286 pages; Dutton: \$2.50). Speaking of Mrs Meynell's country home in Sussex, this authoress says, "There is solitude without." So unstylish a statement would be enough in itself to kill this book, but it dies of many wounds, for similar platitudes stab one from every page. Apparently Anne Kimball Tuell is the last person in the world who should have attempted Mrs Meynell. She lacks an ear.

THE STORY OF IRVING BERLIN, by Alexander Woollcott (illus., 10mo, 223 pages; Putnam: \$2.50) provides the richest reading for one who, like the present reviewer, cares greatly for popular music and for the panoramic, many-faceted life of Manhattan Island. One objects, at moments, to certain strainings at the gnat of rhetoric, to phrases like "fire-tested," "excessive paternity," (speaking of Eddie Foy) "the breath of his boyhood on his neck," et cetera, and finally to a rather too arch and romantic journalism. But one great and saving grace Mr Woollcott possesses, and for this let him go down, forgiven and exalted, among the biographers of the Lively Arts. He has not found it necessary to write of a great popular artist in the Vanity Fair mode; he has simply written the intimate story of New York, of popular melody, of Irving Berlin himself, and in doing these things with approximate simplicity he has produced something brimming with humanity and music, resonant with half-forgotten glorious tunes.

A YEAR OF PROPHESYING, by H. G. Wells (12mo, 352 pages; Macmillan: \$2). This time in a series of fifty-four syndicated editorials, Mr Wells reiterates his serviceable ideas on contemporary disaster and his somewhat easily won, but no less consoling, faith in an ultimate "common Pax Mundi, a World Commonwealth, a federal suppression of armaments," et cetera. On reading these liberal manifestos against the maladjustments of the present economic system, one wishes that there were thousands of Mr Wellses; and then, recalling his vast public, one realizes that there are—which prompts the further observation that the true economic prophet will not be the man who codifies our attitudes, but the one who masters the system. In the meanwhile we may recognize Mr Wells's prominent position in the Old Testament of this matter; or better, look upon him as a leader in that preparatory barrage of opinion which, as the late war and the selling of soaps has taught us, is a necessary feature of every drive.

JOHN DONNE, A STUDY IN DISCORD, by Hugh I'Anson Fausset (8vo, 318 pages; Harcourt, Brace: \$3.50). Sometimes didactic, over-decorated, and carelessly familiar—as Walton's "too devout miniature" is not—this accurately denominated study in discord, strives with Freudian energy to commemorate a man "compact of sensuality and sublime longings, fury and fastidiousness, morbidity and rapture, the gracious and the grotesque"—a "Dionysus" who "played the man by acknowledging the beast."

THE LIFE OF WILLIAM COBBETT, by G. D. H. Cole (8vo, 458 pages; Harcourt, Brace: \$4.50). A meticulous account of a pamphleteer and editor who was spokesman for the English working-classes during the acutest period of the transition from agriculture to industrialism. Cobbett was neither an heroic man nor an astute one, but was a political writer of much polemical vigour and an emotional conviction which overrode many ideological instabilities. His biographer here reconstructs, almost hour by hour, the details of his life and the political and economic minutiae out of which his writings arose. A Cheops of "ant labour," this book is valuable not only as a contribution to the archives, but also for its survey of a very grim and important era in the history of industrialism.

ANCIENT RHETORIC AND POETIC, Interpreted from Representative Works by Charles Sears Baldwin (12mo, 261 pages; Macmillan: \$2.10). Concentrated pleasure as well as knowledge are to be found in this orderly and expertly compact book in which the author, "with complementary technical analysis of ancient achievement," has allowed Greek and Latin writers themselves to be his spokesmen, this "way" seeming "surest toward recovering inductively the ancient artistic experience." We are indebted to Dr Baldwin for a bibliography at the head of each chapter, for a tabular index of Latin and Greek rhetorical terms, for a general index, for uniquely purposeful punctuation, for a retranslating of terms, for a "grave" and magnificently poetic translating of texts—and for memorable interpretations of Aristotle, Cicero, Virgil, Quintilian, Dio of Prusa, and others. It may surely be said of him as he says of Cicero, "Few men writing on style have shown in their own styles so much precision and charm."

PRINCIPLES OF LITERARY CRITICISM, by I. A. Richards (12mo, 290 pages; Harcourt, Brace: \$3.75). The author here undertakes to study art values in accordance with his contention that there is no "aesthetic emotion," no experience in art different from experience outside of art "as, say, envy is from remembering, or as mathematical calculation is from eating cherries." By his analysis of the nature of communication he shows how any simple divorce between art and life is purely verbal, while the conception of beauty as a quality attached to objects is merely the result of a linguistic convenience being mistaken for some external denotable attribute. Mr Richards' doctrines are eclectic; they are arranged and applied with much deftness, his equipment including not only a keen sense of artistic values, but also a grasp of allied problems, a knowledge of the psychology laboratory, and a gratifying skill at definition.

THE THEATRE

ONLY a half dozen or so of the plays I have seen in the last month are still current, and not all of them are of the highest order of interest. This is the time of year when strange producers put forth strange plays, in the hope of a summer run. Swift, and for the most part painless, is their passage; they represent, usually, ambitions without ideas, and intentions without skill. They are, however, a valuable part of the theatrical season, for the outsider has his chance, and can always meditate on his failures and try his next one.

THE GORILLA is probably the best bet of this after-season. In a rough-and-tumble way it is amusing, and in the first act the parallel elements of horror and fun are neatly fitted together. But after that, the author or the producer seemed to be unable to keep out a single gag, and the fun stopped coming out of the material of the play and began to kill the action. There was also a superb chance to bring down the curtain on an unexplained, but thoroughly satisfactory ending, which was muffed by introducing the ancient SEVEN KEYS TO BALDPATE device without any variation.

Among the other plays I cite the names of FLESH, THRILLS, and ALOMA OF THE SOUTH SEAS.

The production of THE MIKADO has revived all the variants of all the Gilbert and Sullivan disputations. It ought to be evident that with the lamentable, but inevitable, disappearance of the old Savoy players, the precise reduplication of the original performances must eventually come to an end. Even Frau Cosima is not immortal, and Wagner has been given, at least in Russia, as if he were an interesting composer of opera, and not a relic. Mr Stokowski has always impressed me, when instead of a traditional *ancien régime* rendering of Beethoven, he brought to bear on the subject all the intensity of a modern mind; and the same process was applied to Shakespeare, not without success, in the Hopkins productions. So I see no reason why THE MIKADO should not be

produced with all the available talent at our disposal. It has sufficient quality to bear the treatment.

In the particular instance I found my chief displeasure in the unnecessarily operatic atmosphere. Miss Namara, in particular, hardly sang a note, for she was too busy vocalizing, and the words which in *IL TROVATORE* happen to be drivel, in *THE MIKADO* can be a source of pleasure if both their vowels and their consonants are pronounced. Treated as the text of light opera, or reduced to musical comedy, those words are extremely easy to sing; it is sheer criminal negligence to use them as a sort of la-la-la medium for vocalization.

The thing reverts to the tiresome subject of *style*. It reverts, even farther back, to the subject of intelligence, in a sense in which the word is not now too often used. If you have intelligence of a thing and know its quality, if you know that *THE QUEEN OF THE CONVICTS* is not a tragedy and that the *MEDEA* is not a melodrama, you are in a fair way to find the proper manner in which to produce these works. If you have no feeling about qualities, if it doesn't matter to you what the nature of a thing is, you have, of course, no business to produce at all. It is quite possible, as the contemporary theatre has discovered, to try certain plays in a style to which they are not accustomed. *HAMLET* played in Soviet Russia as "a study in Danish Imperialism" must have been such an experiment; and the current *WILD DUCK*, played as a wry tragi-comedy instead of a study of neuroses, is a singularly successful other one. You can play Shakespeare for the poetry and for the drama, or melodrama, which the poetry conceals or expresses; but in every case you must know what is the essential character you want to express.

THE MIKADO is not opera, and the operatic tone was wrong; nor is it exactly musical comedy, since so much of its quality depends on intellectual diversion, so the wooden Nanki-Poo and the characteristic Shubert choruses seemed a little out of place. I see no reason why Lupino Lane should not do steps not done before, and acrobatics, too, so long as they are expressive. I even follow De Wolf Hopper in believing that the substitution of a local, contemporary word, is occasionally justifiable when the word in the text is utterly meaningless to us (but no one must change

the name of Captain Shaw in *IOLANTHE*) because Gilbert and Sullivan seem to me to be alive, and not museum pieces. What I object to is the mixture of wrong styles when the simple right style is so obvious at hand.

Wherefore I was better pleased with *PRINCESS IDA*.

The cast of *THE LOVES OF LULU* ought really to see one performance of *ROSMERSHOLM* as The Stagers are giving it. In addition to other virtues this *ROSMERSHOLM* has the distinction of being spoken in superb English. In *LULU* I easily forgive Mr Ullrich Haupt his accent, although I hope he is doing his best to overcome it, as he impresses me more and more as an actor. It is not a question of accent, but of enunciation, of merely knowing what the words are supposed to sound like, and of making them sound that way. An asthmatic cast so belaboured the not too well rendered text of *ERDGEIST* that the audience heard only part of the words and that part was funny. It happens that *ERDGEIST* isn't funny; it is sombre and terrifying, and it is the function of the director to keep from it any suggestion of the ridiculous. The foreignness of the play is extreme; its lack of sympathy for any one, its brutal emphasis on the beast of sex, its terrible swiftness of action, and its early use of a kind of expressionism in the dialogue—all these make it offensive to our well-trained ears. But the direction could have avoided the moving picture chase around the studio which at once gave a reluctant audience grounds for giggling. A great deal should have been done about the voices, too; and much more in the way of figuring out what the whole play was intended to mean. It was a stroke of absolute rightness to have Lulu posing for her picture after Félicien Rops's *Pornocratie*, for that is exactly what Lulu represents. And in spite of some very bad things, Margot Kelly occasionally fell into attitudes and gestures which created the character. On the whole, a bad business, which will be effective only in keeping this mordant play for a long time from our boards.

ROSMERSHOLM is almost as well directed as *THE WILD DUCK*—perhaps as well, for the only objection I have to it is that it seemed, in parts, a little dull, and that may be in the nature of the play. The political radicalism and the awed hush over the

words "free love" are a little ineffective, now, as vehicles for the great emotions which Ibsen makes them carry. But the emotions come to us, in spite of all. It was astonishing to watch them rise, in the later part of the play, from the most unlikely material and to believe in them, until the bitter end. I have held off from Ibsen a long time, and I am afraid I may have sneered at him. His interests and his temperament, as shown in his work, still do not enchant me. But when he is presented as a dramatist and not as a philosopher—which has been his fortune twice this year—I yield entirely and pray Heaven that my stupidity was not too publicly made known.

GILBERT SELDES

MODERN ART

WITH pencil poised in the air ready to write down the art season just past as the dulllest within my recollection, my telephone rang with an invitation to the private view of the last show on the calendar; and when I had gone back to my pencil after taking part in this festivity, behold, my anathemas had withered on my hands, and I felt inclined to look at the New York winter from a different angle. I had had a very good time at the private view. I found myself liking pictures once more. I liked these particular pictures better than any new pictures I had seen in a year; and what's more, all the other people present seemed to be liking them, too, and there was the general and unmistakable feeling in the atmosphere that art, after all, was not so bad, and that it could still give pleasure. It was the private view of the Whitney Studio Club's members' exhibition, given, this year, in the Anderson Galleries.

The Whitney Studio Club, it seems, is ten years old. This is its tenth annual exhibition. The organization was founded by Gertrude Whitney in an effort to aid young artists, and during its first years there was sometimes a doubt as to whether the right young artists were being helped. It is not so easy to help young artists as it seems. It is not so easy in a big city to find out where the real young artists are. They are surprisingly shy—and distrust institutions, which is not surprising, life being what it is. The present one, however, won the confidence of enough choice spirits to begin to figure upon the map a few years ago as a definite stepping-stone for young talents. The exhibitions at the Whitney Studio Club last year had to be seen, at least, by critics. The one this year will have to be seen by everybody. How this desirable situation has been brought about I am not quite sure. It is probably not the work of some one strong individual working in the background, but can be explained perhaps by the fact that the said young persons of talent already inveigled into the fold are beginning to grow a little older, are beginning, in fact, to blossom. It can be remarked, for instance, that there is a distinct connexion between this exhibition and that earlier in the year of

another institution of more and shadier history—that celebrating the Art Students' League's fiftieth anniversary. This exhibition—the next best of the local events—startled by the unexpected but unmistakable revolt of the younger artists against the teachings of the League itself. A whiff of fresh air was let into the stuffy parlours usually occupied by the Academicians, and the group that did the trick could be recognized and was recognized as the Whitney Studio crowd. Cheered by that success and reinforced by the entire personnel of the company, they now put forward an excellent claim to be the genuine and only purveyors of the New Stuff.

As a society, I mean. There has been a real need for a banding together of the up-and-coming, and an urgent necessity for an annual exhibition that shall answer the public's desire, plaintively expressed, to see the art of to-day. The Whitney Studio Club is too big to be considered an *élite*, but there are enough of the *élite* in it to put a glamour over the whole. The effect of the rooms was such that at first I was inclined to think all the pictures were good. Even to the end I persisted in the feeling that I should like to possess about fifty of them. I am always forming imaginary collections and so I bought, tentatively, Thomas Hunt's Sketch for Tapestry, "Peace," Elizabeth Clark's Bacchante, both Louis Bouché water-colours though one of them happened to be "lent" for the occasion, Peggy Bacon's Self-Portrait, George C. Ault's Houses in Brittany, Bill Lescaze's Exercise No. I, Reginald Marsh's Hard Hearted Hannah, Boardman Robinson's Portrait, Niles Spencer's Down the Hill, Charles Sheeler's Still Life, Stuart Davis' Painting, Agnes Tait's Portrait, Henry Schnakenberg's Landscape, Jan Matulka's Painting, Elizabeth Burroughs' Garden at Flushing, Alexander Brook's Compote with Fruit, Glenn Coleman's Fourth Street, Lucile Branch's Decoration Day, Claggett Wilson's Eros in the Storm, Leon Hartl's Landscape with Tree, Yasuo Kuniyoshi's Young Bather with Cigarette, John Sloan's Making Faces, Thomas Benton's Pocahontas Interceding for Captain John, and so on, until fifty.

At the same time I scarcely persuaded myself that any of my fifty purchases were great. When I was younger and first confronted with pictures, I had no doubt whatever as to what was great, and accepted but that. Even in poetry I denied what were

called minor poets. This was because I had been brought up on Emerson. Emerson nowhere specifically belittles democratic standards, but he talks so constantly of the great that his followers end in becoming a bit exclusive. Mr Hunt's allegory to peace looks not unlike an old-fashioned theatre curtain, and is painted in the manner of Currier & Ives prints. The wonderful Miss Clark, I'm told, paints only from photographs. Even in the case of portraits, she first has the victim photographed and then paints from that. To have asked Ralph Emerson and Margaret Fuller, who adored Raphael and Leonardo, to accept such productions as art, would have puzzled them sadly. But what does it signify save that the time changes, and with it, our ideas! Since their day the world has been made safe for democracy, and believe me, democracy knows it. Years ago I knew definitely that Manet's *Woman With a Parrot*, Degas' ballet girls, Renoir's *Canotiers*, and Whistler's *White Girl* were great pictures, and used to deplore the fact that they hung mutely on the walls at Durand-Ruels, priced at nothing at all, and with no takers. I would have induced my dearest friend to purchase them confident that I was making a fortune for him, had it not been that my dearest friend's pockets, like my own, lacked the pittance necessary for the start. To-day, among contemporary pictures, such opportunities do not stare one in the face. The best that I dare swear of my new canvases at the Whitney Studio Club is that they would look well around the house. I don't think of them as future money-makers. But unquestionably they have the present-day accent. They have that value. They are full of contagious gaiety. They have pep. And with that we get back to Ralph Waldo. He could see no sense in trying to evade one's own period. "The Genius of the Hour always sets his ineffaceable seal on the work and gives it an inexpressible charm for the imagination," et cetera.

So I don't say good-bye to the season in a state of complete pessimism, as a few days ago, I thought I might. To discover a whole group of young people in the liveliest state of satisfaction with paint as a means of expression, offsets my discouragement considerably. Their present attainments may not be tremendous; but at least, they have an outlook.

HENRY MCBRIDE

COMMENT

WHEN writers of plays or of novels create plots which are similar, the possibility of imitation occurs to one—of what was in Poe's time called plagiarism. Reflection might easily persuade one that neither author has been aware of the work of the other and that neither piece of work is invaluablely original. Similarly, in the work of poets, resemblances in performance sometimes lead one to attribute to an author, dependence upon sources of which he knows nothing. It is apparent, however, that among poets, aesthetic consanguinity is frequent. The fire, the restraint, the devout paganism of H. D. are unequivocally Greek. Wallace Stevens' morosely ecstatic, trembling yet defiant, multifarious plumage of thought and word is to be found, also, in France. By no means a chameleon, Ezra Pound wears sometimes with splendour, the cloak of mediaeval romance. Employing diction which is not infrequently as decorous as it is instructed, E. E. Cummings shares with certain writers of the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries, a manner as courtly and decisive as it is sometimes shabby. T. S. Eliot often recalls to us, the verbal parquetry of Donne, exemplifying that wit which he defines as "a tough reasonableness under . . . lyric grace."

Amy Lowell most conspicuously provides an illustration of this generic sharing of tradition. Unequivocally paying tribute to Keats in her first book, *A Dome of Many-coloured Glass*, she has to some readers appeared to be now an imagist, now a vorticist, now a writer of polyphonic prose. Granting a various method, one discerns in all that she has written, pre-eminently a love for the author whom she commemorates in her last work. One cannot but find in her imagination, an analogy to the "violets," the "night-ingale," the "tiger-moth," the "rich attire" of Keats. When she says:

"I have no broad and blowing plain to link
And loop with aqueducts, no golden mine
To crest my pillars, no bright twisted vine
Which I can train about a fountain's brink . . ."

when as a pointillist she says of trees after a storm:

"They are blue,
And mauve,
And emerald.
They are amber,
And jade,
And sardonyx.
They are silver fretted to flame
And startled to stillness . . ."

one is in the world of "chimes," of "perfume," and of "falling leaves"—Endymion's world of "poppies," of

". . . visions all about my sight
Of colours, wings, and bursts of spangly light."

Nor is the atmosphere of sentiment, of hospitality, and leisure, at variance with the character of this self-dependently American, sometimes modern American writer. The death of Amy Lowell but emphasizes the force of her personality. Cosmopolitan yet isolated, essentially distinct from "the imagist group," of which she has been called "the recognized spokesman," she has by a misleadingly armoured self-reliance, sometimes obscured a generosity, a love of romance, the lustre of a chivalry which was essentially hers.

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